

THE LITTLE HERO.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.



THE November evening was closing in, blustering and cold, with every appearance of a storm, when three men stood on the beach near Cape May, watching a pilot-boat that lay at anchor in the offing. Her dark and graceful hull, her slender masts with their jaunty air, and indeed her whole general appearance would have forcibly recalled to a landsman the high mettled thorough-bred. As her bow rose to meet the huge waves that came rolling in, the tall masts swung backward slowly, describing a curve against the leaden-colored sky; then hesitating for an instant, they pitched suddenly forward headlong, as if about to precipitate themselves into the deep. Simultaneously, the enormous billow came boiling and hissing past the rudder, to break, a few moments after, in thunder on the shore: while the light craft rose dripping, like a water-fowl after a dive, her hull glistening in the twilight away back to her very main-chains.

"Isn't she a beauty?" said one of the spectators. "Dang it, there's not a gal comes here all summer," he added, enthusiastically, "that's got the shape of that ar' craft."

His companions laughed, and one of them said, after a pause,

"Little Billy seems to have a hard time bailing out, the waves pitch him so."

The lad alluded to was in a small cockle-shell boat, attached by a rope to the stern of the schooner. At every pitch of the latter, the light skiff swung about; now floating loosely, now hurrying after the larger craft.

"Ay!" said the first speaker. "But he's got to learn his craft, and the sooner the better, for he's nothing to depend on but it, either for his mammy or himself. But what's that?" he suddenly cried, as the pilot-boat shot ahead of the skiff, which immediately turned broadside to the waves. "Whew! if the painter aint broke! The boy'll be drowned!"

The rope had indeed parted. Instantly all three, as if by one impulse, rushed into the water, only awaking to the impossibility of reaching the lad, when the spent breakers came washing to their waists. They looked at each other in dismay.

"He's got no oars, nor even a sail. If he could hear us, we might tell him to get her head

to the wind," said the principal speaker. "It's a chance if he thinks of it. But in this wind he couldn't hear the angel Gabriel. There, Lord help us, he's gone."

As he spoke, a mighty roller came advancing from the offing, towering higher and higher as it approached the boy, till it seemed to the spectators as if the mountain of waters would never cease accumulating. When it reached the little skiff, it hung suspended for a moment, and then rushed downward, like a troop of wolves on its prey.

But while the lookers-on held their breaths in horror, the lad, with quick sagacity, had wrenched a bit of board from the lining of the skiff, and hurriedly snatching up his coat, had fastened the garment to it. With this jury-mast he had managed, at the last moment, to bring the skiff's head to the wind, so that at the very instant the spectators expected to see his boat hurled bottom upward toward them, they beheld it mounting the wave gallantly, as a storm-bird breasts the gale.

"Well done, Billy," shouted the principal speaker, and carried away by the excitement, he gave voice to a hearty cheer, in which the others joined.

"The lad's a born sailor," said one of the others, when the first burst of joy had passed. "It would be a mortal shame to let such a brave little fellow die, even if his poor old mother didn't look to him for her living. We must launch a surf-boat, board the craft, and be after him. He can't live long with that rig."

The plan of the speaker had suggested itself simultaneously to the others. But some time was necessarily occupied in getting a surf-boat into the water, and during the interval the skiff had nearly disappeared in the darkness and distance, the lad having succeeded in getting his little craft before the wind, as his only chance for permanent safety.

"He's done his best, but its taking him right on to the shoals, and in half an hour nothing can save him," said the man who steered, as he stood up and looked for the lad. "Pull away with a will, boys, or we'll be too late after all. Ha! he's waving his handkerchief, as I live. He sees us and says he's hearty yet—he's a trump,

and no mistake—pull away—here we are, look alive!"

In a moment more the little crew were on deck, and as soon as possible the anchor was hove, the sails set, and the schooner put before the wind. The anxiety of all had become insupportable, by this time; for the delay had been considerable, notwithstanding every effort at haste: and in the interval the skiff had vanished. Whether she had only disappeared in the gloom of the sea-board, or whether she had been capized, no one could tell; for all had been too much occupied to notice the exact moment when she passed from sight. But the fears, or at least doubts, exceeded the hopes. It was, therefore, with a sensation of relief, that the crew felt the pilot-boat to be in motion, and as the waters whizzed past, their spirits rose. The very schooner seemed to share in the general anxiety. No greyhound, loosed from the leash, could have sprung forward more eagerly or swiftly.

The night had now shut in. The wind sighed mournfully up in the sky; a wild scud went flitting overhead, now hiding, now revealing a few, faint stars; and the sea was black as ink, except where the white caps flashed up for an instant, ominous of a coming tempest.

For a long time the rush of the hull, as it glided through the waters, was the only sound heard. Every eye meantime, was scanning the narrow, but tumultuous prospect, in the vain hope of discerning somewhere the skiff, and its occupant. As the schooner left the shore out of sight behind her, this scrutiny became more sharp: but alas! to no purpose.

"Don't you see anything yet?" cried the master at last, hailing the principal look-out from the helm. "Surely he's in sight somewhere."

"There's no sign of him, sir."

"We're close on the shoal now, and must soon go about. Can we have passed him?"

"Can't say. Don't think we have," laconically replied the man. "It's dark enough: but I've looked sharp, sir."

At that instant a dull roar was heard close ahead, and a long line of foam suddenly whitened the gloom in that direction, proclaiming that the schooner was perilously near to the shoal.

"Randy about," shouted the master; and instantly every man sprang to his station, "haul in, let go, belay! Round she is cheerily!" And as he finished, the light craft danced away on the other tack, leaving the breakers at a safe distance astern.

"Look lively now, mind we don't leave him," cried the master, as the shoal rapidly faded into

the darkness behind. "You don't see his skiff bottom upward, any of you?"

The pilot-boat was now no longer gliding noiselessly, like a greyhound coursing, but leaning over to the wind, she struggled against the head-sea, like a war-horse charging up hill. When the bow struck the opposing waves, the spray often flew crackling to the very cross-trees apparently, while simultaneously a quiver ran through the hull from stem to stern, and the masts creaked audibly. Far out to leeward bellied the larboard shrouds, while those to windward were so taut that a landsman would have expected to see them snap.

"Nothing yet?" These were the words with which the helmsman broke another long silence.

"Nothing, sir."

"He can't certainly be inside of us. We've either missed him, or else he went to the bottom before we reached the shoal. But hark! What's that?"

As he spoke what seemed a faint cry came out of the gloom ahead. Was it a child's voice? Or was it only a modulation of the gale?

They listened, not daring to breathe. Nothing reached their ears but the sound of the wind in the rigging, and the dash of the waters thumping against the bow; and, with a long-drawn sigh, the master was preparing to break the silence, and propose tacking toward the shoal again.

But suddenly, close at hand, there rose a cheering voice out of the darkness.

"Hillo there! Hillo! Don't run a fellow down."

"It's Billy," shouted the master, electrically. "It's the boy himself. Hillo, it is! Hillo! Where are you, my hearty?"

His voice rang clear over all the uproar of the winds and waves, like a trumpet-call of succor in the crisis of battle.

"Here I am," stoutly replied the little hero, his skiff dancing up suddenly out of the gloom. "Luff a little, or you'll be over me."

All rushed to the side of the schooner, except the helmsman, who called up all his skill to shave the skiff, as he afterward said, without hitting it.

An interval of thrilling suspense succeeded. The pilot-boat deviated, for an instant, from her direct course, curtesying up toward the wind like a lady in a dance; and then, falling off again, dashed forward on her old course, like the same gay beauty coquetting a partner. But, during that second, the intrepid lad, watching his opportunity, had sprung at the bob-stays, and clambered dripping on deck, just as the schooner fell off.

He was surrounded at once, and borne, shouting

out in triumph, aft, where the master, handing the helm to another, caught him in his arms, as if he had been his own child.

"You'll be as great a man as Decatur, if you live, my lad," he cried. Decatur was, in the master's opinion, the greatest person that ever breathed. "But come below, come below," he continued, "you're as wet as a musk-rat. Dang it, Billy," he exclaimed, rapturously, "but you're a hero."

"You think I wasn't scared then, sir," said the boy, proudly, his eye brightening, and his little figure expanding perceptibly. "You'll tell mother so, won't you, sir?"

"That I will," said the master, clapping him heartily on the shoulder. "You did exactly what was right, and kept up your spirits bravely: if you hadn't, my boy, you'd been food for the sharks, maybe, by this time. I should have been

some skeered myself, Billy, if I'd been in your place."

"Would you, though?" said the boy, as he looked up, by the dim light of the cabin-lamp. "Oh! no you wouldn't. But I was glad, I tell you," he added, quickly, his eyes glistening, "when I saw the schooner come riding the seas toward me, and thought I'd see mother again." And, at this recollection, his fortitude gave way, and he burst into a flood of tears. But they were tears sacred to a mother's memory, and they did him honor.

This is no fancy sketch. The newspapers of last November recorded the self-possession and courage of the hero of our story, exactly as we have told it, only in more general terms. Do we err, in saying with those journals, that the world will yet hear more of this brave boy?

THE THUNDER STORM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &C.

I

"PLEASE, mother, let us go."

It was a childish voice that spoke; and the little hands clung obstinately to the parent's dress.

"How you bother me! Yes, go, for mercy's sake, and don't let me see you back in a hurry."

As she spoke, Mrs. Carr gave the broom she was using a toss, and flirited her dress away from little Maggie's hold so irritably, that the smile, which had at first brightened the young child's face, died away into a sorrowful glance.

The quick-tempered parent saw the look, and felt rebuked. She turned away, saying, "well, go, if you're going."

Childhood soon forgets even injustice. Maggie's spirits gradually recovered their elasticity, and her voice was heard calling to her sister Lucy to stop sweeping the walks, and bring the big basket, for that they were going down to the woods to gather flowers. So away the two went, happy in the Saturday afternoon's holiday.

What a pleasant time they had, those innocent children, in those grand old woods! How they ran hither and thither, attracted by some new flower; how they played hide and seek among the trees; how they watched the birds that hopped fearlessly about them: how they arranged and re-arranged their spoils in the basket; and how Lucy, finally, sat down on a bank and began weaving a chaplet for Maggie, which she tried on again and again, declaring each time that it was "beautiful, oh! so beautiful, but she'd just put another flower in to see if it wouldn't look better still."

Occupied in this way, the children had not observed how far they had wandered into the wood, nor how dark it was becoming. Suddenly Lucy looked up.

"Why, Maggie, it's almost night," she said, in surprise, "we must hurry home." And she rose to go.

At that instant a low, sullen growl was heard. Maggie, with ashy face, crept close to her sister's side, too terrified to speak, but asking with her large, uplifted eyes what it meant.

"It's thunder," said Lucy, in a whisper. "Don't tremble so, darling!"

"I thought it must be a lion," whispered Maggie, still almost afraid to look around.

"There are no lions here, you know, Maggie," replied Lucy, "they are only found away off, in Africa."

"But there are bears, and panthers, I've heard father say," said Maggie, blushing for her mistake, yet still speaking low. "Don't you remember he said he'd often heard 'em howl at night?"

Lucy was but nine years old, so that she could scarcely be expected to be much braver than Maggie, who was five; so at this reminiscence she looked fearfully over her shoulder, as if half expecting to see a savage beast leap from some covert near. Till then she had not thought of the bears and wolves. Even older persons, perhaps, would have felt uneasy, if unarmed; for it was the original forest, and of vast extent, stretching miles away quite over the mountains.

Nevertheless Lucy tried to keep up her courage. "It's only the thunder, Maggie," she said. "Let us hurry and get out of the wood. Maybe we can do so before it begins to rain."

With these words, taking her little sister by the hand, she began to retrace her steps, walking so fast that Maggie could scarcely keep up with her.

But fast as she walked, she could not outstrip the storm, whose rapid approach was heralded by the increasing darkness and by the wind rising among the trees. Neither of the children had ever been out at such a time before, and the moaning breeze was often so much like the sob of a lost child, or the cry of some one in distress, or the growl of an angry wild beast, that they were continually starting in terror. At such moments of alarm, Maggie would cling closely to her sister, while Lucy would hasten her steps anew, her little heart throbbing almost to bursting.

Gradually the wind rose to a gale. The leaves showered in thousands to the ground; the trees bent, rocked and groaned as if in agony; the roar of the elements was awful; and the sky grew so dark that Lucy, no longer able to pick her way, could only hurry blindly forward, dragging Maggie with her breathlessly.

Nearly an hour passed in this manner, an hour that seemed an age to the children. Long since,

Lucy knew, they ought to have been out of the wood. But the forest only grew wilder at each step; every familiar appearance had vanished; and at last the poor girl could no longer conceal from herself that they were lost.

Night also was at hand, a night of rain and tempest. Lucy asked herself, could they survive the wet and cold? Could they escape the wild beasts of which she had heard? Oh! what would they think at home on finding that she and Maggie did not return. As such reflections succeeded each other in her mind, she would have stopped hopelessly, but that the sight of her younger sister nerved her, and for Maggie's sake she courageously kept on, trying to recover the lost path.

At last, further progress became impossible, so thick grew the darkness. They had now reached a little open space, where a huge tree abutted on a broken bank; and to her dismay Lucy recognized this as a spot which they had passed long ago. They were walking in a circle, she saw. At this thought her firmness finally gave way.

She paused, therefore, and looked in agony around. Yet still mindful of her younger sister, she gathered Maggie, with motherly care, under her own shawl, in order to shelter her from the wind that blew through the glade fiercer than ever. She had scarcely done this when a clap of thunder, breaking almost immediately overhead, went rattling down the sky, earth and heaven shaking under the concussion, as if Nature was dissolving. It was accompanied by a flash of lightning so vivid that everything for an instant seemed to swim in light. Lucy was blinded by the glare and stunned by the thunder. The horror of the moment was increased by the gloom which fell on the scene, accompanied by a sudden cessation of the wind indescribably awful.

Maggie thought the world was coming to an end, and whispered as much, clinging wildly to her sister. Then bursting into loud sobs, she exclaimed, "If mother was only here," and hid her face on Lucy's bosom.

Lucy was scarcely less terrified than her sister. The very ground seemed still reeling beneath her. The rain, too, now began to fall in torrents, as if the fountains of heaven itself were opened. Wasn't it just like what she had read of the Day of Judgment? Her limbs refused to support her, and she sank to her knees, dragging Maggie with her. Yet she made a last effort to cheer her sister.

"Don't, don't cry so," was all she could say, clasping Maggie and sobbing as she spoke. Then

her little remaining fortitude gave way, and they both wept together, clasping each other convulsively.

II.

MEANTIME Mrs. Carr, after bustling through her work, like a thrifty housewife as she was, had seated herself in her low, creaking rocking chair, with her basket of mending before her. Occupied thus, she had not observed the gathering storm, till a roll of distant thunder startled her.

"Dear me," she said, starting to her feet, "them children will get wet through."

She hurried to the door, as she spoke, and began anxiously to look down the village street, in the direction Lucy and Maggie had taken. But she could see nothing of them. Over the neighboring mountains, however, hung thick, black clouds, the sure precursors, in this region, of a violent storm.

Directly she saw a couple of neighbors coming in from the fields, that lay between the village and the foot of the mountain. Throwing her apron over her head, she ran out and asked if they had seen the children.

The answer was in the negative. As yet, however, her anxiety was only sufficient to irritate her.

"Lucy ought to know better," she said, sharply, "it's time she was home long ago. I'll make her remember another time, I reckon."

One of the men looked uneasily at the sky a moment, and then passed on, shaking his head. When out of hearing he said to his companion, "I've hearn tell of children being lost in that forest. Twenty years ago, when the settlement was new, they say a boy starved to death there. I wonder if Missis Carr would scold her little gal this way, if she knew it might happen to-night to her own children."

It was only a passing reflection, and had escaped his mind altogether, when, two hours later, as he was preparing to go to bed, fatigued with a hard day's labor, there came a knock at the door. The visitor was his fellow workman.

"It's true what you said about them children," were the words of the intruder. "They haven't come home yet, and the mother is taking on like one mad. She says they'll die before morning, even if the panthers don't find 'em. And it's likely enough on such a night."

His host had been too much stunned by the intelligence to speak. But his wife now pushed forward, her eyes wide open with horror.

"What is that you say?" she cried. "Whose children are lost?"

"Mrs. Carr's."

"Not lost in the forest?"

The visitor nodded.

The wife gave a quick scream, and glanced involuntarily at her own little ones, whom she had been preparing for bed.

"Poor Mrs. Carr! Poor, sweet little dears!" she cried, running to a cupboard for her shawl and bonnet. "Here, Peggy," she continued, turning to her eldest child, a girl of twelve, "you must put your brothers and sisters to bed the best way you can. John," she added, addressing her husband, "you're going of course. Only to think, little Maggie, born the same week with our Jane, out on the mountains in a night like this."

Her woman's heart was alive with sympathy. Nor was her husband backward in responding to it. It is a beautiful trait of human nature, that any incident like this appeals right to the heart, even with the most unlettered; for every parent imagines what his or her feelings would be, if the lost one was their own.

"'Twas for John I came," said their visitor, as they left the house. "The whole place has turned out, that is the men, and is going to search the forest. But they'll want all the women that can be spared up at Mrs. Carr's, for she's got the 'stericks powerful bad: she says she was out of humor because Maggie plagued her to go, and told 'em she never wanted to see 'em again: and now she says its a judgment on her."

When they reached the house, they found most of the neighbors already collected, the men talking about the door-way and planning their mode of search, while the women crowded the sitting-room inside, from which came the shrieks of the conscience-smitten mother.

Mrs. Brown paused only long enough to learn that, almost an hour before, in the height of the storm, Mr. Carr had come home. Up to that time the mother had flattered herself that the children had stopped at his shop, for he was a wheelwright, and worked at the end of the village. But from that moment she had been almost frantic. The neighbors, on hearing that the children were lost, had volunteered to go out in search of them, but it took some time to collect them, and Browns had been the last summoned, for they lived at the opposite end of the town.

Entering the house, Mrs. Brown saw two female acquaintances trying to hold Mrs. Carr, who was struggling in their arms, her hair hanging disheveled about her.

"Let me go," she cried, "I will go. I'll walk on my hands and knees all over the mountain, if the Lord will only give me back my children.

But he never will, he never will," she said, rocking herself, and speaking in a tone of hopeless agony. "I told 'em I didn't want to see 'em again in a hurry, and he has took me at my word."

The neighbors gazed at the poor, frantic creature with tears in their eyes, saying what they could, in voices choked by emotion, to soothe her. One suggested that the children had probably found shelter in a log-hut that stood at the foot of the mountain. Another said they might have been waiting, under some capacious tree, till the rain ceased, in which case they were now on their way home, as there was only a light drizzle at present. But the mother would not be comforted.

"Don't say that," she cried, sharply, "for you know it ain't so. Its been drizzling for an hour, and they'd have been here if it was so." The neighbors felt the truth of this. "Oh! will nobody go for them," she shrieked: and with a wild and sudden effort she freed herself from the two women who held her, and rushing toward the door, had gained the porch, when the sturdy arms of John Brown caught and restrained her.

"Let go, let go," she cried, passionately, writhing to release herself. "They're my children, and no one goes for them." Then finding that she was powerless in the grasp of her Herculean neighbor, she added, "oh, let me go," in a beseeching tone, so different from her usual manner, that it brought tears to many a manly eye.

"We're all going," said John Brown, soothingly. "You could do no good. It's not a night for a woman to be out."

He had not reflected, or he would not have said this. Its effect on her was frightful. She renewed her frantic struggles to escape, glaring about her like a tigress torn from her young.

"Not a night to be out," she shrieked, "yet my children are out in it. Let me go. Let me go, I say." And in her insanity she bit the hand that held her 'till the blood came.

"Molly, Molly," said a strong voice at this instant, and her husband pushed through the group of men. "Go in, for *their* sake, and have blankets and hot water ready, or when we bring them back, they'll die mayhap for want of proper care-taking." He spoke in a cheerful, hopeful voice. She listened and grew calm, as when a maniac hears the voice of his keeper.

Taking her up, as he ceased, in his strong arms, he carried her back into the house, where, placing her in the hands of her neighbors, he first affectionately smoothed the rain-drops from her hair, then kissed her with rough kindness, and telling

her to keep up a good heart, and have everything ready when they returned, hurried away lest she should see the tears that began to gather, and roll down on his cheek, big and slow.

"Now, neighbors," he said, speaking huskily, and drawing the back of his hand across his eyes, as he stood once more in the door-way, "we will be off, if you say so, for all is ready. I thank you," he added, with the natural dignity of deep suffering, as a dozen faces mutely expressed their sympathy, "I know you will do as if it was your own children: and if it don't succeed," here his voice faltered for a moment, but struggling manfully he went on, "God's will be done!"

III.

THE plan for the search was soon arranged. It was known that the children had entered the wood by the highway that ran through it. In order, therefore, to have a fair prospect of success, it was necessary to extend the line of men as far as possible on each side of this road, and so advance up the mountain. If this failed there was no hope.

The rain had changed, as we have said, from a succession of heavy showers, to a light but continuous drizzle. Torches of pine-knot were provided, in addition to lanterns. At the head of one detachment, Mr. Carr placed himself. To the other John Brown was assigned.

Had there been any trace by which to follow the children, the search would have appeared less difficult. But the darkness would have precluded the exercise of the ordinary wood-craft, even if the torrents of water which had fallen had not obliterated the usual signs. It was with but faint expectations of success, consequently, that the expedition set forth.

For more than two hours the search went on. Steadily advancing up the mountain side, they scrutinized every foot of ground they passed; but without success. The waving of their torches through the woods startling the birds continually, and now and then a frightened owl blindly stumbling by, more than once, by the noise thus occasioned, raised false hopes in those portions of the expedition furthest from the scene of commotion. But all such delusive expectations soon faded.

Long since, the parts of the wood more familiarly known had been passed, and now it was the original forest that was being traversed. The way grew wilder; the difficulty of maintaining the line increased; and hope, which had been but faint at the best, abandoned almost all. It was felt that the search might be protracted for weeks, through this vast and nearly unexplored

region, without discovering the children; for, on such broken ground, it was impossible thoroughly to examine every nook, and the lost ones might be passed, a little to the right or left, yet no one perceive them.

"Keep a stout heart, neighbors," said John Brown, "and have sharp eyes. The children may be worn out with wet and cold, and be unable to make themselves heard, though seeing and hearing us. Hark! what was that?"

He stopped suddenly, for a low, peculiar cry rose on the night air, seeming to come from the depths of the forest ahead.

All listened in silence for a moment, when the cry was repeated.

"It's a panther," said one of the men. "I thought I knew what it was, the first time."

A common shudder went through the hearers. All had simultaneously recognized the sound, and all simultaneously had thought, "what if the lost children had fallen in its way?" Each father involuntarily hastened his steps, in order to reach, as soon as possible, the spot from which the terrible cry came.

More than once that cry was heard again. But it seemed retreating further into the depths of the forest. Several times it sounded so much like the voice of a child, that the listeners started, thinking they heard at last the lost ones in the distance. But the repetition of the sound soon convinced them of their mistake. Perhaps nothing could be conceived, more calculated to sharpen the pangs of the father's heart, than these alternations of hope and despair. He was a strong-minded man, and sustained also by religious principle, yet he could not help giving way to emotion.

"Oh! if they have already fallen a prey to this terrible wild beast," he cried. "God Almighty have mercy! My poor Maggie! My dear, motherly, little Lucy!"

Occasionally they would reach a huge tree, which the storm had torn up by its roots, and which, in falling, had crushed a dozen smaller ones, or saplings, in its descent. The frequency of these wrecks suggested new fears. What if the lost children, having sought shelter under it, had been involved in the ruin of such a one! Once, indeed, the miserable father fancied he saw, peeping out from beneath a gigantic fallen trunk, the fragment of a child's dress. He sprang forward, as he beheld it, with a sharp cry of agony. But when he flashed his torch directly upon it, certain that it would reveal the distorted limbs of one of his little ones, he found that a piece of white bark, assisted by the deep shadows, had deceived him.

Midnight arrived at last, and even the stoutest began to be fatigued. The air at that hour, on the exposed mountain, was keen, and penetrated to the marrow.

"Poor things!" said John Brown, as he called a halt of his detachment, in order to consult whether to carry the search further in that direction, or to spread more to the left and retrace their steps partially. "In their thin garments, and wet through as they are, they've died, most likely, long ago. Yet," he added, after a moment, as his eye fell on Mr. Carr, approaching with haggard, dejected mien, "how can we tell this to the father? Let us work on, neighbors, while he clings to hope. To-morrow his lot may be ours."

IV.

THE result of the consultation was a determination to extend their line still further to the right and left, and return part of the way down the mountain, for in this manner they would sweep ground hitherto unexplored.

"It's most unlikely," said John Brown, who had particularly urged this change, "that they could have strayed even as far as this, in a direct course, when night set in; and, after that, they'd be apt to sit down somewhere, afraid to go on, or too tired to do so. Besides, even if they tried to keep afoot, its most likely they went around and around, as people lost in the woods mostly do. It's my opinion, that we'll find them further down the mountain, off somewhere to the right or the left."

These views met general approval. But the utmost hope which they inspired was that the dead bodies of the innocent sufferers might thus be recovered. Even the father appeared now to look for nothing more favorable than this.

"You've done all that can be done," he said, in reply to a question whether he was satisfied that the search had been carried sufficiently high up the mountain, "and God bless you for it," he added, in a trembling voice. "I shall never be able, neighbors, to repay you for your kindness. But if ever you also lose two darlings, you'll know how a father's heart longs to find even their bodies, if its only," and here his voice broke into sobs, "if its only to be sure that wild beasts haven't devoured them."

He covered his face, for a moment, with one of his brawny hands, as he spoke. Then, without looking back, strode away in the direction which had been agreed upon. The rest mutely followed.

The rain had now ceased entirely. But the woods were as wet as ever, the darkness was almost as great, the cold was as keen and pene-

trating. Each man, as he moved along in line, kept a watch on his neighbor's torch to see that he did not wander from the true direction, all the while scrutinizing every bit of brush, each shadow under the trees, and any inequality in the ground that might escape a hastier observation. Now and then one or another halted a while, where the forest was particularly thick, in order to be sure of not overlooking some hidden covert. Occasionally also there would be a shout raised, all waiting afterward in silence to hear if there was any reply.

But every effort continued abortive. Many hours had now been passed in the search. Even the hope of discovering the bodies, at least till daylight should enable the search to be conducted anew, had disappeared. Besides the most vigorous were now becoming exhausted. All were wet through. The majority had passed the preceding day in labor. The further prosecution of the search was becoming, therefore, physically impossible. Even the father was impressed with these convictions. Calling a halt, he proposed, with sad resignation, that the party should return home, at least until morning. But how meet the mother, and break to her the sad certainty? He spoke on this subject to John Brown.

"I will help you. God will help us both," was the reply.

"Thank you. You're right, John," he said. And he added, "I own, neighbors, I am weak as a child; but I can't help it;" and making a convulsive effort to master himself, during which they could see him, by the red torch-light, choking down the grief till every muscle in his throat swelled to bursting, he continued, "this blow has unmanned me. I shall want some one to give me courage when I get back, or I shall not dare to meet the mother's face. I told her so certainly we would bring them back."

His beseeching expression was heart-rending to see; and it was the more touching, because Robert Carr was known as a man of unusually strong mind, and one whom all looked up to for support and consolation in trouble.

He had just lifted his head again, after these words, and was preparing, with sad resignation, to lead the way toward the road, when suddenly, from the outskirts of the exploring party, came a quick, glad shout.

Instantaneously every face was turned eagerly in the direction of the sound. It had been supposed that all the members of the party had been present at the exploration, but now, on more narrowly scrutinizing the group, one was found missing.

"Ho! Here! Ho!"

The voice was clear and joyous, and was recognized immediately.

"It is Jim Strong," cried John Brown. "What can it mean? Does any one see his torch?"

All ran eagerly in the direction of the voice, and soon a light was seen glimmering, like a faint halo, through the wet woods.

"Ho! Ho! Ho-o!"

Exultant and still more exultant, that voice rose on the night air. Every heart was beating its fastest. Every pulse bounded high with hope.

"My children," cried the father, thrillingly, leading the excited race.

It seemed but a minute till they reached their companion. Standing on an old fallen trunk, he waved his torch to guide them, crying, as they approached,

"They're here, alive and well, hurrah!"

As he spoke, the father had parted the undergrowth, and leaping the fallen tree, found himself in a small glade. Before him were his two children, lovingly entwined in each other's arms, and just roused from sleep.

Their heads only were raised. Their little eyes were distended with wonder, mixed with affright.

"Thank God," cried the father, falling on his knees and clasping them in his arms, then bursting into convulsive weeping.

The little ones recognizing their father, had simultaneously sprung to his heart, where they lay, sobbing for joy, and clasping him tighter and tighter.

The neighbors stood at a respectful distance, awed by the scene; and there was not a dry eye in the whole company.

At last the passion of the father's joy moderated. He remembered the Almighty hand which had restored his children. Hushing the sobs of his little ones, and looking up, he said reverently,

"Let us pray!"

All uncovered, and there, in the dim forest, the father, holding each little one by a hand, poured forth his soul in a thanksgiving, which none present forgot to their dying day. It was eloquent with a gratitude, such as only those who have been delivered from deep tribulation can realize.

When the prayer was over, strong arms pressed the wet little ones to warm sheltering bosoms. Maggie would not leave her father, nor would he consent to part with her: indeed he looked regretfully on Lucy, as John Brown lifted her away, evidently longing to carry her also. At first Lucy insisted on walking, but she found, almost with the first step, that this was impossible, so stiff was she with the cold. So she

consented to be carried, laying her head on John's broad shoulder with a thankful smile, and putting her little arm around his neck lovingly, as if she had been his own child.

Before they set out, however, Lucy had to tell how they became lost. She described how they had knelt down in affright during the height of the storm; and how they fell asleep in each other's arms, after they had said their prayers to each other. "Maggie," she said, touchingly, "often asked for mother. I watched her a long while after she was asleep, and tried to keep awake, but I couldn't, I suppose; for the first I knew was being waked by the noise and light, and seeing father."

Jim Strong had also to tell his story.

"I had a sort of feeling," he said, "that I'd just got a little further this way—I spose it was the Lord that sent me"—for even the roughest acknowledged the hand of Providence in that hour, "and bless me, as I got into this ere opening, the fust thing I saw was the children, lying asleep in each other's arms, just like the Babes in the Wood."

Fatigue was forgotten now. The road back to the village was soon traversed, for each man seemed to tread upon air. Long before the joyful procession reached the door of the Carrs, a crowd of women around it was discerned, for one had been on the watch for hours, and at the sight of the torches she had summoned the rest. The cheering shouts of the men announcing, while they were yet distant, that they returned with the children, the mother, now frantic with joy, came rushing down the street to meet them, and catching first one child and then another from the arms that bore them, almost smothered them with kisses and embraces.

But what words can paint all that followed? The delicious joy of the mother, the crowding of the females around the recovered dear ones, the tears of all, the almost hysterical congratulations. It required the interposition of some of the more thoughtful, to have the innocent sufferers relieved of their wet garments, placed in warm beds, and allowed to seek the sleep, so necessary for their health, and demanded so imperatively by their fatigue.

From that day Mrs. Carr's character has greatly changed. Nor has she ever been heard, even in her most irritable moments, to vent her feelings on her children. She looks on them as mercifully and almost miraculously restored, after they had been taken from her as a judgment.

But is it not written, even of the birds of the air, "your heavenly Father feedeth them—are ye not better than they?"

JENNY'S NEW-YEAR'S SLEIGH RIDE.

BY H. W. DEWEES.

EVERYBODY said young Blackwood was in love with pretty Jenny Lea. So, also, said his long-continued, particular attentions—so said his manner—so said his eyes, but so did *not* say his tongue.

It was very provoking, for he had every reason to hope. Jenny's shy, pretty manner told him almost as plainly as words—"Speak, and I am yours for the asking." But Mr. Blackwood did *not* speak, and what was worse, dog-in-the-manger-like, he kept others away from what he did not seem disposed to enjoy himself. His brow would grow black as a thunder-cloud, did any other young man so much as dare to speak to his Jenny—for any one but himself to ask her to dance was an unheard of temerity. He arrogated to himself the exclusive right of waiting upon her—of directing her—yes, sometimes, of scolding her.

Yet with all this assumption of supremacy, my lord had never deigned to declare his love—never offered his hand; no engagement whatever existed between them. Everybody thought it very strange, and Jenny pouted a little, and in her inmost heart, thought so too.

Now Jenny had plenty of spirit in general, and this made it all the more vexatious, that she should be so meekly tame and patient in this particular case. It was truly annoying to a looker-on, to see her so imposed upon, and lorded over by one who had not the shadow of a right to control her.

The fact is—and I may as well confess it—the poor little thing was so much in love, that she did not know how to manage at all.

So things went on, and so, perhaps, they might have been going on to this day, but all at once—I know not whether from some hint from a friend, or that Jenny's native spirit was at last aroused—certain it is, that a great and notable change came over her manner.

A charming sleighing excursion had been projected for the approaching New-Year's day. About ten gentlemen, and as many ladies were to make up the party. They were to ride about fifteen miles into the country—have a supper, and a dance, and then return to the city by moonlight. As each gentleman was to provide his own vehicle, and take a lady, there was an

eager competition for the honor of escorting favorite belles. Young Blackwood, with his usual nonchalance, was in no haste to secure Jenny's companionship, but in his own good time condescended to say to her, carelessly,

"Jenny, you will ride with me, of course."

"Thank you," said Jenny, "but Mr. Collins has already been so kind as to ask me."

"Eh? What?" cried Blackwood, starting, and scarcely believing that he heard aright—"you don't mean you are going with him?"

"Certainly."

Young Blackwood turned on his heel, and walked away. He felt himself an indignant, and ill-used man. The shocking bad temper into which he fell was far from being sweetened by finding that his dilatoriness had procured him the honor of escorting a young lady, worthy, doubtless, but somewhat faded, and very silly—the last choice of all who were to be of the party.

New-Year's day arrived, bright and propitious, the snow in excellent order for sleighing.

It had been arranged that the whole party should assemble at a certain rendezvous, so as to set out together, and as the appointed time approached one gay sleigh after another might be seen whirling to the spot. The prancing horses, covered with silver bells—the bells' merry jingle—the various colors of the ladies' plaids and dresses—the rich fur robes, with their bright linings, and better still, the joyous, rosy faces, and the sound of ringing laughter, made up an inspiring and brilliant scene.

One countenance only looked out of keeping with the gay occasion. It was our poor Blackwood's, as he sat gloomy and taciturn, beside his elderly companion. His eye glanced furtively toward Mr. Collins' sleigh; he saw Jenny's face, bright and fresh as a rose—he heard her gaily laugh at some witticism of her companion's—he saw that companion's glance of admiration, and he grew ten times more gloomy and taciturn than before. I am afraid poor Miss Moody found him very dull, and that the ride was as intolerable to her, as it was to him.

It was over at last, however; and now, having all assembled in the large, cheerful, old country house, and having partaken of a good, warm,

bountiful country supper, laid in a room where glowed a bright, hospitable wood fire, arrangements were being made for the promised, and eagerly-expected dance.

On repairing to the dancing-room, where most of the company were assembled, Mr. Blackwood's eye glanced in search of Jenny; she was not there, and conjecturing that some adjustment of her dress detained her up stairs, he sauntered up and down the hall, nervously waiting for her.

The fact is, that he had determined to make his peace with her, by the presentation of a propitiatory bouquet. He had procured a very rare and beautiful one in the city, and had, by taking infinite pains to protect it from the frost, succeeded in bringing it thither unharmed.

Jenny soon came tripping gaily down the stairs. Blackwood in his heart thought her the sweetest and loveliest creature in the world, and that he would give his right hand to win one of her old smiles. With a timidity quite new to him, he presented his flowers, and begged the honor of her hand for the first dance.

Jenny carelessly thanked him—"She was engaged to Mr. Collins."

"Might he hope for the next then?"

"No, she was engaged to Mr. Summers."

"Or the next?"

"She had promised Mr. Howell."

Young Blackwood bit his lip, and his old ill-humor returned; he went into the dancing-room, and sat sullenly in a corner, chewing the cud of his bitter fancy, and meditating on what he thought his flagrant wrongs.

He watched Jenny, gay and brilliant, dancing with first one gentleman, and then another—laughing and chatting merrily all the time. In truth, the gentleman, pleased to see her once more released from her thralldom, crowded around her, and paid her so much attention, that she was really the belle of the evening. Blackwood's jealous eye saw everything—he saw his own bouquet thrown carelessly aside, while another, presented by he knew not whom—Mr. Collins, perhaps—was carried constantly in her hand, and carefully cherished; he noted every glance of admiration directed to her—he observed every smile she bestowed.

"By George," he muttered, at last, between his teeth—"there's not a man in the room, who is not in love with her!—and she—the coquette—the flirt—the—the little jilt—I do believe she returns *their* affection."

This absurd generalization of his jealousy, might have opened the eyes of a cooler man, but Blackwood was almost beside himself with

apprehension, lest the precious treasure, he had come by some strange mental process to consider his own, should be stolen from him. He felt the untenability of his claims upon her—he was alarmed beyond reason by her change of manner.

If, he thought, she had at last grown tired of him, (he felt sure she had loved him once,) if she were thinking of some one else, what remained for him, but to throw himself into the river, or go crazy, for life had lost every charm for him.

The thought of her riding home with Mr. Collins was wormwood to him. He dwelt upon it till the idea became insupportable—he must do something to prevent it. Accordingly, he went to the gentleman who had been voted master of ceremonies, and who happened to be a particular friend of his, and said, as carelessly as he could,

"Harwood, my good fellow, you must do something for me—I'll do as much for you another time. Manage it so that Collins shall give up his partner to me when we go home. I have a particular reason for wishing it."

"Impossible, my dear Blackwood; what a strange request. Collins will never consent—the prettiest girl of the party, too."

"That's it—that's it," returned the agonized lover—"he'll be making love to her on the way home—and—and he'll offer himself—men are so hasty about these things sometimes—and she'll accept him, and—then I'm wretched for life—that's all."

"I see—I see," returned his friend, smiling. "Well, I'll try what I can do for you."

How Harwood managed it, does not appear, but his good offices were successful. Mr. Collins meekly took his place beside poor Miss Moody.

Blackwood, highly elated, handed Jenny to his vehicle—sprang in after her, and off they set at a furious rate.

Little would it become me as a delicate and high-minded historian to pry into and report the secrets of that *tele-a-tele* sleigh ride. I shall only state what all the world knows—that notwithstanding the speed with which they started, their sleigh was the last to reach home: and the next day it was no secret in B—that Jenny Lea was engaged to be married to young Mr. Blackwood.

In conclusion, I would merely add, for the consolation of those innocent and inexperienced young lady readers, who may be displeased with the conclusion of my story, and inclined to pity my poor heroine, condemned to such a morose, tyrannical Blue-Beard of a husband, that married

ladies will perhaps take a different view of the } whether it is probable, that the girl who had
case. } learned how to manage her lover, was likely to
I leave it for them to conjecture, however, } forget the art when he became her husband.

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SOPHIE'S BROTHER: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY MRS. G. M. RIDDLE.

I RECOLLECT as well as if it was yesterday, the first time that I ever consulted my mirror. I had been listening to some ecstatic description of loveliness when the thought entered my mind, "am I a beauty?" I retired to my room, and scanned my features with a critic's eye, trying to discover beauties in a face that was only passable even when viewed in the most favorable light. The lady whom I had heard described was a brilliant blonde. I was a brunette, and my complexion in contrast seemed absolutely swarthy. I turned away with bitter disappointment.

I was at this time in my fourteenth year. My father and mother had both died before I was old enough to feel their loss. Having no near relations, I lived with my guardian. He and his estimable wife were very kind; but they were not my parents; and, feeling this, I grew morbidly lonely. I sought relief in reading fiction, and lived apart in the shadowy land of romance. Its delights were to me inexhaustible. In my hours of vivid ecstasy I would weave dreams for the future, which were to be redolent of untold felicity.

This state of things continued till Mr. Stanton, being about to remove to a distant part of the country, the propriety of consigning me to the care of Madame A——, the principal of a celebrated boarding-school in a northern village, was suggested by his wife. To this suggestion I at first demurred, but gradually became reconciled to the idea, and when my kind guardian left for the far West, I was delivered to the care of Madame A—— for a period of several years.

I can still recollect the feeling of strange bewilderment with which I awoke, the first morning after my arrival. I was as yet alone, though assured of the pleasure of shortly having a companion. I had, with my usual vivid imagination, pictured a perfect Hebe, when, to my great astonishment, on entering my room one morning, I beheld perched upon a heap of trunks in the middle of the floor, swinging her feet back and forth, a great, awkward girl, who with an air of the utmost nonchalance was staring at everything around her. I coolly told her that she must have mistaken the apartment. But no, for Madame A——, who entered just at the time, introduced me to Miss Jemima Edson, as my future room-

mate. I bowed haughtily but said nothing, resolved passively to submit to Miss Jemima's society, since it could not be helped, for as long a period as she should be pleased to stay.

The next morning, which was Sunday, the first object which greeted my eyes was Jemima arrayed in her Sunday best; bright pink silk dress, cut low in the neck; blue satin slippers; and bright yellow sash. "Is that the way you dress where you came from?" said I. "Yes, don't you think it *mighty* fine?" she answered. I told her I thought it was most certainly, but that our customs were different, and that it would never do to go to church, unless she wore a shawl or mantilla. She very reluctantly consented to disguise the brightness of her dress and symmetry of her figure under a black silk mantilla; and I also persuaded her to substitute black shoes for blue; still the bright red of her bonnet and parasol made her appearance anything but *subdued*. When she joined the teacher and scholars, in the lower hall, preparatory to issuing forth in procession for the different churches, even Madame A—— could scarcely avoid a smile; while a suppressed titter came from most of the girls. Madame A—— told us that as it was so cool we would not need our parasols, and that we had better leave them at home; so Jemima was shorn of her bright appendage, making her appearance much less remarkable.

The first year passed on leaden wings. Though I was studious, and was praised by my teachers for my advancement, I saw I was no favorite; and knew that I was esteemed proud and distant by my schoolmates; for I had wrapt myself in a chilling reserve that few had essayed to penetrate. Jemima still occupied my room, and I had really formed a sort of liking for the girl, who was possessed of some good qualities, though as impassive and indifferent as some huge block of wood. I had frequently overheard her warm into something like life when defending me from the charge of "being proud," of which the girls often accused me in her presence.

The first vacation I was the only pupil remaining; but I was not unhappy: I had more freedom, and frequently took long walks for botanical specimens, accompanied by a nephew of Madame A——'s, a boy of about fourteen.

He always took his fishing-rod or gun, and would often wander off. Under the shadow of some favorite tree, reclining upon a mossy seat, I sat for hours listening to the voices of those dim old woods, or lost in dreamy reverie. Oh! those dreams of youth—how joyous—how spell-bound do ye seem.

It was one of those never-to-be-described hazy days of Indian Summer, that I was resting in my favorite seat, with a wreath of crimson wild flowers in my hair, when, feeling thirsty, I made a cup of some of the large leaves lying near, and bent over a spring at my feet. Suddenly a shadow darkened its bright surface. I raised my eyes, and beheld the apparition of a young and handsome man, dressed in a dark green hunting suit. He apologized very politely for intruding, asking for a drink, in a complimentary strain, that, without being rude, yet brought the blood to my cheek. I offered him the cup. He filled it, and bowing to me, said, with a smile, "Your health bright fairy of the fountain," then bowing over my hand, as he returned the cup, gave me an interesting look, and departed.

How did those features haunt my dreams! But in vain I repaired to the moss-grown spring, he never more appeared! In vain, amid crowds I sought those haunting eyes, their glance I never met! I became melancholy and depressed. At last, however, a return to school duties prevented me from dwelling too much on this image. My room was now shared by a lovely girl, the very opposite of poor Jemima. Sophie Lee! how shall I picture your gentle face, your loving eyes of blue, the pure transparency of your fairy cheek, in repose pure as the mountain snow-flake, yet when excited lit up with all the warmth of a crimson sky at sunset. She was a fragile creature, more resembling some delicate flower than anything fitted to brave the blast of autumn, and though I had stood aloof from other sympathy, my heart opened instinctively to this bright blossom. When I became more intimate with her she made me her confidant. To my surprise I now heard that my gentle little Sophie was engaged, actually engaged to be married, and that the long letters which she received, and which I had supposed came from her brother, were mostly from a devoted lover. With her face hidden on my shoulder, Sophie first told me her tale of love. It had been an arranged matter from childhood by his or her friends, Sophie hardly knew which, but she did know that "Willard Raymond," the chosen one, surpassed all others for goodness and every virtue. "When once seen," she said, "none could fail to love him:" and so she would talk of him with all the

fervor of which her young heart was capable. With what a glow of rapture also would she receive his letters, those white-winged messengers so dear to the absent! These she would sometimes, though not always, show to me. I must confess that in their strain there was a something which struck me more like the letters of a brother to a younger sister, than of a lover to a betrothed bride. At least they would not have satisfied my jealous heart. With Sophie's enthusiasm for Raymond, mingled the most devoted love for her brother Herbert, of whom she never tired discoursing.

The second year of my stay at Madame A——'s glided away swiftly and pleasantly. Sophie had invited me to spend the coming vacation with her; but she was called home suddenly just before the close of the session, by the illness of her mother, and so I spent my vacation as usual amid the dullness of deserted rooms. I was by this time in my eighteenth year, and was, as my flattering glass assured me, much improved in personal appearance. This thought gave me much pleasure. And why did I so prize beauty? I, who was said to have talents, and to excel in almost everything. I had existed so long in an atmosphere of romance, that it became necessary to my happiness to be admired: and beauty, I knew, or rather believed, was the surest road to this.

At last Sophie returned, but clad in mourning. I folded her to my heart with a renewed vow to love and cherish her; inwardly resolving that no shadow, which my hand could avert, should ever rest on that fair brow. She seemed now always depressed. She had not seen her lover, she said, who was unavoidably absent, but she still received letters from him occasionally, though not as frequently as heretofore.

And what had become of my unknown hero? I had never seen him again, though his vision still haunted my dreams; and when Sophie would tell me of her brother, and express her hopes that our fate might be united, I would gently chide her, telling her that my heart was already filled with an idea that none other could replace; and then I would take her to the fairy spring, and describe the interview with the unknown knight; and she would laugh, and say it was a pity indeed that so romantic an adventure should have no sequel.

Her health, never firm, meantime failed. I was often startled by a bright hectic flush, and at last secretly wrote to her father, telling him my fears. He came as soon as possible. He was much shocked at her appearance, but betrayed no uneasiness before Sophie. He told

close, however, that, as the season was so soon to close, he had come to take us *both* home to his Southern home. Sophie flew to Madame A—to beg of her to let me accompany her; the request was granted; and so our happiness was complete.

As we approached the "rose-twined cottage," which Sophie had often described, and I saw the bright, vivid green of the shadowy elms, and the almost pathless shrubbery, gay with roses of every hue, I no longer wondered at her enthusiasm. Sophie's brother came out to meet us. I thought, "Sophie has not exaggerated," for in as much as I could judge in the gathering twilight, he was tall, handsome, and commanding-looking. How much love, too, was expressed in the embrace in which he folded her again and again to his heart. How pleasant also was the welcome which he extended to "Sophie's friend," as he called me.

Weeks of quiet happiness passed. Sophie seemed much better. Nothing could exceed the devotion of her brother to her wishes; he anticipated her every want, he gathered for her the fairest flowers. To me he was attentive and polite, but nothing more. I *felt* that he did not regard me with the same partiality as did Sophie. Gradually this roused in me more interest than perhaps I should otherwise have felt, for wayward as is a woman's heart always, *mine* was unusually perverse. At last I discovered that the ideal which I had so long cherished, was fast gathering round a hero that was really *tangible*, and that that hero was Sophie's brother. But I was outwardly altogether impassable. I said to my heart, "peace be still, let none wring from you your secret," so that not even Sophie suspected how much I was interested in her stately brother.

The autumn had come. Sophie seemed much improved. There was to be a bridal party for one of her friends, to which we were invited; and Sophie was anxious to go. We were sitting in my room, on the afternoon of the eventful day, discussing our toilet for the evening, when the door bell rang, and Sophie was summoned to the parlor.

She was gone a long time, and when she did return, her face was beaming with excitement.

"Willard has come!" she cried, "oh, I am so happy. And now you will see and know him. He is to be at the party this evening; he will join us then, as he has something to attend to, which prevented him from remaining to accompany us. And now, dear Julia, you must make yourself *very splendid*, wear your black velvet, for everybody nearly will wear white, and I always

think you superb in that." Generous, unselfish heart! to think of others *then* before herself.

So, at her desire, I dressed my hair in glossy braids, binding them round my head: a crest of glittering rubies gleamed like stars upon my forehead. My arms glittered with bracelets of the same crimson hue, whose red light lent a warmth of coloring to my beauty, which was wanting unless under the influence of excitement. Sophie, who came in just as I had put the finishing stroke to my decorations, fairly started, exclaiming—"Why, Julia, how really magnificent you are!" Very lovely was my darling Sophie; shrouded in her soft dress of palest rose, which lent a faint color to her delicate cheek. Very bright were those eyes of blue with anticipations of pleasure! Very gentle the heart, which beat beneath that falling lace. "Oh! that my darling's dreams of happiness may all be realized," said I, kissing that pure uplifted brow.

With a stately step I entered the drawing-room of Mrs. —. Conscious of looking well, I was determined to make at least *one* do homage to my charms. That one was Herbert Lee, Sophie's brother, who I thought had evinced rather more interest in my presence of late. Still his coldness piqued me, and I wondered at his indifference.

I saw his glance of surprise as his eye first fell on me, and my face was lit up with smiles of pleasure in consequence. I looked in vain for Willard Raymond. He had not yet arrived. But later in the evening, when I had joined the dancers, my attention was arrested by a party just entering, and Mr. Raymond was the first announced. With what a strange, undefined emotion did I recognize in him my long lost hero, "The Knight of the Fountain!" Before he had time to observe me, I had, by a great effort, subdued all external emotion, and when Sophie came gaily forward and introduced her lover, I betrayed not the slightest trepidation. He, on the contrary, turned pale, stammered, and seemed so unlike himself, that Sophie, turning to him with a glance of surprise, said, "You have met before." "Nay," said I, quickly, "Mr. Raymond and myself are strangers." He murmured something about "strange resemblance," and turned away. Soon after he sought me out, and asked my hand for the next dance. Not being engaged, I was obliged to accept him. He seemed to watch my every motion, and to have eyes for no other; his behavior was so marked that all observed it: but I treated his attentions with coldness for Sophie's sake. Why had I made myself so brilliant, I thought now with pain. Was not each glittering gem armed with a sting

to pierce that gentle heart? I could have torn them from my hair as if they had been vipers. Once the temptation presented itself to make jealous that icicle of a brother by flirting with Raymond; but glancing at Sophie's pale cheek, I dismissed the suggestion with scorn. I believe that Herbert divined my thoughts, for never had he been so attentive. He seemed pleased that I should so far regard Sophie's feelings, and his conversation never before had been so brilliant.

Meantime, whenever I glanced at the *lovers*, Willard seemed absent and pre-occupied; while Sophie looked wearied and really unhappy, so that I begged her brother at last to take us home. On retiring to my own room I closely scanned my heart. "Did I, or did I not love Willard Raymond, my long-cherished ideal?" I said. With a gush of thankfulness I answered, "*No*." I had been cherishing a vain illusion, I found, which vanished when divested of all its romance. But I could not conceal from myself that Sophie's lover was attracted toward me. Should I cause my gentle friend one pang? Must I call one shadow to that pure young brow? No. My mind was made up. I would fly from his presence. I would return to Madame A—.

The next morning, when I entered Sophie's room, she had not yet risen. I drew away the curtain. How lovely I thought her! The rounded arm which shaded that placid brow was white as the snowy pillow; the pale cheek, pure in its fair transparency; the long, heavy fringes closed on those weary eyes, were yet damp with tears of bitterness; and from those flushed and parted lips was heard a soft, low murmur. I caught the echo of his name—the faithless one! I sat beside her pillow, buried in gloomy thought; but the voice of Sophie roused me. "Julia, dear Julia," it cried, "where am I? Why are you sitting there?" I told her that I had been for a long time watching her slumbers, but that I should not allow her to idle away any more of the pleasant morning. "Indeed, dear Julia, I feel weak this morning, my exertions last evening quite overtasked my strength." "Rest then, my darling," I replied, "I am thinking of leaving you for a time. I am about returning to Madame A—." "Never, dear Julia, you must not leave me, I have felt for a time my early doom, and before the buds and blossoms of another spring I shall be safe in my father's house, whither my mother's smile seems ever beckoning me: and you will not, cannot leave me." "Hush, my dearest darling," I answered, "do not talk of dying." "Yes, dear Julia, I have long felt the fallacy of my earthly hopes—nay, turn not away, you must hear me now. As I have told you before, it was

the wish of Willard's father, communicated to him on his dying bed, that Willard should choose me for his future wife; indeed a promise was exacted from him that he would fulfil this last request; this I never knew until lately: but the truth has forced itself upon me; and I have felt for many months that his love was not lavished upon me, in the same rich measure that flowed from my heart for him: and last night, nay, do not interrupt me, when he followed your every motion with admiring eye—and how could he do otherwise?—I felt that it would be my greatest happiness to see two dearest friends united before I leave you. Promise me then, dear Julia, that you will love and cherish Willard Raymond as I would have done." But I would not allow her to proceed. "No, dear Sophie, not even to gratify you," I said, "can I promise *that*; besides I have no heart to bestow, I love *another*." "Can it be?" she cried. "And you have not breathed the secret even to me? Or is it the unknown hero?" "No, dear Sophie, I have forgotten him long ago," I replied. "Still my love now is hopeless." "Ah! will you not tell me?" she said, throwing her arms around my neck. I trembled to reveal it, but I could not deny her. "Promise me," I said, "that to no one—not even to the winds will you breathe his name." The required promise was given, and, bending over her, I spoke the name of her brother, but so low that I scarcely thought she heard me, for I feared lest the walls might repeat the echo. A perfect glow of delight suffused those pale features. She kissed me again and again. "Then, then," she cried, "will my heart's fondest wishes be accomplished." "Yes, but, Sophie, my love is not returned, nor ever can be," I answered.

She faded from that time: and Willard, who seemed roused into an appreciation of the value of the gem that was passing from his grasp, was as devoted as her warmest friends could wish. He came daily with his gift of flowers, fit offering for the pure-hearted. How she worshipped every leaf and bud! what hope and peace to her sad heart did she imbibe with their fragrance. We hoped for a time that she would revive, but our hopes were only too fleeting. The bright beams of morning rested on the face of the fair sleeper, as I beheld her for the last time. Those lovely eyes were closed to know no waking; a sweet smile rested on the mouth, whose lips were closed forever. I pressed one last, long lingering kiss on that fair brow; and with a wild gush of weeping was led to the carriage that was to bear me away. Mr. Lee embraced me with all the tenderness of a father, and told me I must come to them again to cheer their loneliness; while

Herbert gave me a silent pressure of the hand, his whole face quivering with emotion. But he made no demonstration of love. I had passed from before him, perhaps forever; and he had made no sign.

Oh! how desolate, how very desolate seemed my heart when I once more entered our little room, where were garnered so many memories! Everything spoke of her own dear presence—her sweet face appeared gazing from every page I turned. How I longed but for a glimpse but once again of those cherished features. Madame A——, too, wept her loss as if she had been a daughter; and so much was Sophie beloved by her teachers, so closely had she nestled in the hearts of her schoolmates, that it was long indeed before we could speak of her with calmness or resignation.

The trials through which I had passed had not been without their effect upon my character; and I was determined to make myself worthy of the love of those among whom I was placed. In interesting myself in their pursuits; in sharing their joys; and in communing with their sympathies I found balm for my own lacerated heart. I have not told you, reader, how deeply Herbert Lee's image had been cherished in the depths of my inmost soul; how of him, and him only had I dreamed, until I felt that in tearing that idol from its throne every bright hope must be crushed; every longing of my heart remain unsatisfied; every earthly hope be sacrificed. Oh! how lonely and desolate seemed the future now! What had I done to merit such a fate? Nevertheless these feelings I tried to subdue. Still I was conscious of being greatly changed. I no longer felt the same buoyancy that elated me in other days; but gradually a calm settled on my life, as clouds of fair tranquillity are seen resting on the face of Nature after days of storms and tears. Long before the year had expired I was sought by Willard Raymond. Fain would I have shunned the meeting. I assured him his hopes were all in vain—his I could never be. He seemed much agitated, and told how, years before, he had watched me in my rambles for many a day unseen, before he had made himself visible! Then how he had fled the spot and avoided me, remembering his engagement to Sophie, for how could he break a pledge made to a dying father? At last, meeting me so unexpectedly the night of the party, his feelings had unwittingly betrayed him into showing an indifference to Sophie, that, he sometimes feared, had hastened the ravages of her disease. "But now that he was free," he said, "would I not give him some hope? Would I not, after years

had passed, let him see me again?" I rose almost in anger. These propositions seemed sacrilege to Sophie's memory. "Had you loved her as she deserved," I said, "had you even been true, as a man of honor, to your pledge, you would never have pained her poor heart." "But I repented," he added, "you yourself witnessed the expiation I made on her death-bed." "I did," I replied, more calmly, "but the blow had gone home nevertheless," and then I told him how, with martyr-like spirit, she had herself offered to sacrifice him. "Go," I concluded, "once I might have loved you; but now *never!*"

He went, and after his departure I felt still more lonely. My depression of spirits alarmed me. Could it be that I had even now a lingering affection for him? I felt perfectly satisfied that I had done right, and yet I was very sad. Herbert could never be mine, I said, for if he had loved me he would have sought me before this. Had I consulted my happiness in thus dismissing Raymond? Was it such a crime to love me, that I should send him with scorn away? No, I had not done wrong, I said. Better live lonely and unloved always, than do sacrilege to Sophie's memory, or unite myself to a man, who, though once my ideal, I could no longer look up to. So I sat, one winter morning, ruminating on the darkness that had gathered around my pathway, and which it seemed no bright cloud was ever to penetrate, when a knock at my door startled me from my reverie. It was a servant, with the information that a gentleman desired my presence in the parlor. "My guardian then has come to take me home," I said, for my term was nearly out. "Was I so soon to leave?" I thought of the friends I was leaving, the only ones I now had; and tears came to my eyes as I descended the stairs. With trembling steps I approached the parlor. I paused a moment to recover composure, and then slowly entered the room, but still with downcast eyes, for I dreaded to meet the reality of my now almost forgotten guardian's presence. The French window was close by the door, and as I passed it, hearing the bell of the public academy, which was immediately in front of Madame A——'s seminary, ringing for school, I involuntarily glanced out. A snow had fallen during the night, and street and roofs were covered with the pure white mantle. Two little village girls were trudging along, leaving deep footprints at every step, but they did not seem to mind either this or the cold. "Ah!" said I, "they have a father and mother, they have brothers and sisters to love—were I too thus blessed, I could willingly be poor, I also could cheerfully trudge through the snow to school. But there

is no one to love me, I am alone in the wide, wide world."

But suddenly at this thought, I was recalled to to myself, by a person rising: and now I was at last compelled to look up. Ah! what was my astonishment and delight, when, instead of my guardian, I beheld Sophie's brother, who advanced with open hands and eloquent eyes to meet me. "Dear Julia," he said, and drew me to the sofa. Then he poured forth in burning language, the love so long kept back, and the reason why he had delayed.

"I have loved you from the first, dear Julia," he said, "but well did I guard my secret. Sophie's warm affection for her friend endeared me to you before I saw you, and I was prepared to love at once. But I fancied that my feelings could never be returned. You seemed ever pre-occupied, as if already secretly won. Then Willard came. I had known, for a long time, that he had not loved our Sophie with the changeless love that her warm heart deserved, and to you I saw—with what bitterness none may know—his wavering affections turn. Your noble conduct, at that sad period, endeared you still more to me. Yet I sometimes fancied that it was rather your love for Sophie, and a wish to spare her feelings, than a dislike to him that impelled you to shun his attentions. I knew, after her death, he would seek you as soon as decency would permit. I casually heard that it was he you had met at the spring, about which, before I met you, Sophie had told me. I feared—oh! how I feared—that he was the one I had persuaded myself you secretly loved. I heard of his visit to you, and despaired. The agony that followed you cannot imagine. But when a few days since I saw the notice of his sailing for Europe, I thought there yet might be hopes for me. And now tell me that you will come and make our desolate home glad with your bright presence; you know not the sadness which seems resting there, since we have laid our darling down to sleep. I have not rested, day or night, since I read that Willard sailed, but travelled straight here. Say, will you, dear Julia, be mine."

There could be but one answer to such an appeal. With my head buried on his shoulder, I murmured my confession of love, love that could never change.

The next morning he called, and had a private interview with Madame A——, the issue of which was, that, with my consent, I was to remain with her until the end of the present term, at the expiration of which, with the approval of my guardian, our happiness was to be consummated. To my guardian he wrote, and in due time there

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came a letter announcing Mr. Stanton's coming; he seemed perfectly satisfied with an arrangement which would conduce so much to my happiness and *worldly prosperity*—and our glorious morning in June, when all Nature seemed redolent with brightness, I bade adieu to that beloved spot.

My tears could not be restrained even with so much happiness before me, and though with him—the chosen of my heart—he whom I had vowed to love and cherish—Sophie's brother!—for, when Madame A—— and my beloved teachers came to the carriage, and pressed my hand in parting, the tears would flow, and I wept on his breast unrestrained.

On our tour we were passing through the lower part of the state of Virginia, and a storm overtaking us, we were induced to seek shelter in a large, comfortable-looking cabin by the road side. A perfect shower of little darkies came running out to indulge their curiosity by a peep at the strangers. Suddenly we heard the voice of their mistress shouting from the door, "you Bill, you Jim, you Joe, just take yourself off;" and immediately she came out to meet us. I thought "surely I have seen that face before." But not till she had fallen upon me in an overwhelming embrace, did I recognize my old schoolmate—*Jemima Edson!* She seemed overjoyed to see me; said that she had "*felt like*" she should never see me again. "But you see I have not forgotten you," calling up a little red-headed, tottering girl—"I've named her Julia." I was truly pleased with this mark of affection from her honest heart, and rummaged my trunk for a fit offering for my little name-sake.

The storm abated, and we were obliged to leave, or we should miss the cars that evening, though we could scarcely get away. "We must stay and see Jim," so she called her absent husband: but after partly promising to visit them at some future time, and telling her that she must bring "Jim" and little Julia to see us, in our own still more Southern home, we took our leave.

It was a bright summer evening as we approached that well remembered spot—that pleasant home that Sophie so loved—and the events of the last few months seemed so like a dream—that I could scarcely realize that she was not again by my side. Her father was already coming to meet us. He held me in his arms, and with the tears running down his aged cheek, blessed me as his daughter.

The happiness of the succeeding years who can describe? My life has passed without a cloud; not a wish ungratified; not a want unanticipated. Ah! reader, may you be as happy:

AUNT KITTY'S VISIT TO THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"DEAR me, how provoking," exclaimed Lydia Somers, as she finished reading a letter, which the postman had just left. "That horrid aunt Kitty writes word she is coming to visit us, in order to see the Crystal Palace, and that she will be here to-morrow. It's too bad," she continued, angrily. "As if no time would suit her but when Horace Milton is coming to stay here. She'll disgrace us all. How he, just fresh from Paris, will laugh at her and us."

The speaker was a fashionable-looking girl, and the scene an elegant parlor in New York. As she paused, a young girl, about her own age, but quite plainly dressed, looked up from some sewing, and said,

"Who is aunt Kitty?"

"Oh! she's a vulgar old maid," sharply retorted her companion, "as antiquated as the hills. She lives in an out-of-the-way place in the country, where a new fashion hasn't been heard of for thirty years. I never saw her but once, and then she was here, when I was a child; but I still recollect what a fright she looked. However there's no way of escape. Papa was brought up by her parents, and he will always have her treated with respect. But I give you notice that I shall turn the shocking creature over to you; and you must do your best to keep her out of Horace's way."

The fair girl thus addressed sighed. Horace Milton, two years before, and just prior to his departure for Europe, had spent a few weeks at the house of his father's old friend, Mr. Somers; and the orphan, whose lonely and dependant condition made her remember the slightest demonstrations of kindness, still cherished the memory of his occasional pleasant words. She had fondly imagined also that there might be a repetition of those delightful conversations, of which she so often dreamed. But the task to which her cousin had assigned her, she saw would prevent this, nor was she without a suspicion that it had been deputed to her as much to keep her out of Horace's way, as to release the heiress from an odious aunt. There was no remedy, however, and so Jenny Vernon sighed, but said nothing.

The next day aunt Kitty arrived. She wore leg-of-mutton sleeves and a poke bonnet; and

carried an old, faded, black cotton umbrella. Jenny began to think that her cousin had not exaggerated in the least respecting their visitor. Lydia haughtily answered aunt Kitty's voluble inquiries in as few words as possible, and then giving Jenny a significant look pretended to be summoned out of the room. She took care also not to return. Jenny, therefore, had to entertain their visitor as she best could. She found this, however, no very difficult task, for aunt Kitty, though ignorant of the conventional ways of a city, had a fund of sterling sense, to which was added a warm heart, so that, after the first half hour's embarrassment, Jenny succeeded very well with her, and began to think that entertaining aunt Kitty would not be so great an evil after all.

That same evening Horace Milton arrived. But a mere recognition, and a surprised glance from her to aunt Kitty, was all the notice which Jenny obtained from him. Lydia exerted her best abilities to monopolize their handsome and distinguished guest, so that there would have been no chance for the modest Jenny, even if aunt Kitty had been away.

Toward the close of the evening, when Mr. Somers came in, the subject of the Crystal Palace was introduced, and conversation became to some extent general. Horace gallantly invited Lydia to accompany him there. Aunt Kitty immediately spoke up, appropriating the invitation to herself also.

"I'm obleeged to you, young gentleman," she said, "and will be glad to go with you, for I hear you've been all over Europe, and so can tell a body, maybe, what all the most curus things are."

Horace, for a moment, opened wide his eyes. But he immediately bowed, and said that, as the exhibition would take considerable time, they had better set off as soon as breakfast was finished.

"That's a good plan, young man," said aunt Kitty, "for we'll have from seven o'clock till six to look at things. I spose you don't breakfast here before six, cousin," she continued, turning to Mr. Somers, "though, down our way, we do it by candle-light."

Lydia looked horrified, and cast an imploring

glance at Horace, who, however, preserved an impassable face. Mr. Somers answered, laughingly,

"I'm afraid you'll think our habits degenerate, aunt Kitty, for we never breakfast earlier than nine o'clock. You'll find Jenny, however, up by sun-rise, if you want a companion. It's an excellent practice of her's, and gives her, I often tell Lydia, her rosy cheeks."

All eyes were directed toward Jenny at this compliment, and her cheeks were more rosy than ever in consequence. She felt her heart flutter strangely on catching Horace's expression. What could it mean? Was it really admiration? Or did her foolish fancy deceive her?

Precisely at eleven o'clock, the next day, aunt Kitty, Horace, Lydia, and Jenny set forth, aunt Kitty wearing her antiquated poke-bonnet in spite of Lydia's many manoeuvres to induce her to change it for another. It must be confessed that she presented a strange spectacle in crowded and fashionable Broadway. More than once the boys shouted, "See that old woman with the stove-pipe on her head," and even grown up people smiled as they passed her. Lydia felt as if she could have died with mortification, and would have shrunk back, if Horace had let her. But Jenny had been won, even in this short time, by aunt Kitty's kindly heart, and stoutly stood by the old lady, her bright eyes flashing indignantly whenever she heard a jeer from the idle lads.

"Who are them boys hallooing after?" said aunt Kitty, who, in her simplicity, never fancied she herself was the object. "The ill-bred louts, they want a good threshing: and if we had 'em down our way they'd get it. But how dreadfully crowded it is," she added. "Suppose, my dear, we stand aside awhile till the procession gets by."

"It's always this way, aunt Kitty," said Jenny. "There's no procession. If we were to wait till night it would be no better."

"Law! Now you don't say," answered aunt Kitty, simply. "I thought it was a Temperance procession, or an Odd Fellows, or something else of that sort."

"Take my arm, aunt Kitty," said Horace, kindly, who had noticed the rudeness of the boys, and had, at this moment, forced his way to her, and overheard this remark. "I will make a road for you. I'm used to crowds. Jenny and Miss Somers will follow close behind us."

They reached the Crystal Palace at last. Lydia had thrown her veil over her face so as to prevent recognition; but even this did not quiet her fears; and she dreaded continually lest some

city acquaintance should meet them. For aunt Kitty talked so loudly, and was so curiously dressed, that everybody who passed turned to look at her and her companions.

"Is that what you call the Dreadful china?" said aunt Kitty, when they stopped to look at some exquisite porcelain. "I've heerd of it often, but never expected to see it."

"They call it Dresden china," mildly said Horace.

"Dresden, is it? Well, now, I thought it was Dreadful. It costs a dreadful sight of money. they say, and I sposed that's how it got its name."

At the Greek Slave and Eve aunt Kitty looked dubiously, but said nothing. Some of the other statues, however, roused her indignation.

"I don't think much of them stone pictures," she said to Lydia. "They'd better have put some clothes on 'em."

A general titter went around the spectators, who overheard this remark: and Lydia felt as if she should sink through the ground: but aunt Kitty passed on quite unconsciously.

"I've heerd about some Goblin stuff—tapestry, they call it," said aunt Kitty, directly. "What is it? Pictures of ghosts?"

Lydia bit her lips. But Jenny kindly said, "It's a material for hangings to walls or windows, or to cover chairs, exquisitely worked to resemble the finest pictures. It is Gobelins, not goblin, and so called from the building where it's manufactured, formerly belonging to a man of that name."

"Thank you, my dear, for setting me right," said aunt Kitty. And now Horace, conducting them to where the tapestry was exhibited, explained, at large, the process of manufacturing it.

Lydia's distress continued. She could not but believe that Horace secretly despised them all, and was only amusing himself with aunt Kitty. But Jenny thought differently, and thanked him with her eloquent eyes more than once, only to blush immediately afterward, however, for her temerity.

After lunch they looked at some laces. Lydia was in raptures over a pocket-handkerchief said to be worth five hundred dollars.

"Five hundred dollars for a handkercher!" exclaimed aunt Kitty, putting on her spectacles to peer at the case in which the article was exhibited. "Well I never. The thing ain't good for nothing," she added, contemptuously, "but just to look at. I could buy a better one for half a dollar, any day, down at our place."

The machinery for making flour barrels excited her enthusiasm. When she saw the wood put in,

to come out staves almost immediately, she gave vent to her gratification aloud.

"Well, now, that is curious," were her words, as she turned to Horace. "I wonder what old Jonathan Jones, the cooper, down our way, would think of it. But it's a blessing, any how, to have the dumb iron doing the work of a human creature."

The whole party were exhausted with fatigue, when they reached home in the evening. But aunt Kitty had no sooner taken a cup of strong tea, and had a footstool placed snugly for her by Jenny, than she began to narrate to Mr. Somers what she had seen.

Lydia, during the whole of that evening, was in torture. Aunt Kitty's remarks, though always indicative of shrewdness, betrayed an utter ignorance of many things, which the most ordinary person living in a city would have known; and this to Lydia was mortifying beyond description. But Jenny, who looked more at the sterling sense of aunt Kitty, was, on the contrary, instructed; for she saw how others, accustomed to a different mode of life, viewed things; and it gave her food for reflection. Horace participated freely in the conversation, but his face revealed nothing of his opinions.

The next day, when the family assembled to breakfast, Lydia was absent. Jenny coming in to preside told the cause. Her cousin was sick, she said, of cold and over-fatigue: there was a high fever; she thought the doctor ought to be sent after.

Aunt Kitty had noticed the haughty contempt with which Lydia had treated her the day before; but at this intelligence she forgot all, and was full of interest for the invalid.

"If I had but some of my *harbs* here," she said, "hoarhound, or tansey, they would do her a power of good. But I spose there isn't such a thing in the house? Ah! well, then we must soak her feet. Hot water and ashes is an excellent thing, my dear," she said, turning to Jenny, "as you'll find when you have a family of your own. And while we're soaking her feet, the doctor may be sent for," she added, with a sigh, "since you've got no *harbs*."

Lydia's sickness proved a severe one. The unusual fatigue, the cold draughts from the floor of the Crystal Palace, added to the mental excitement caused by her foolish mortification at aunt Kitty, had brought on a severe attack of fever, which, at one time, actually threatened her life. During her illness Jenny was assiduous at the bed-side. So also would aunt Kitty have been, if the weak-minded girl would have let her; but the very presence of the old lady in the

chamber irritated the invalid; and so aunt Kitty could do nothing, but see that everything outside the room went on properly, and thus relieve Jenny from all care but that of attending on the invalid.

Horace would have left the house, when Lydia's sickness became serious; but this Mr. Somers would not permit. "You do not accommodate us in the least," said the latter. "Aunt Kitty, you see, has turned housekeeper, and an excellent one she makes; for she has the sense to leave the meals to the cook; and in all things else she knows more than the best of them." So Horace remained. Perhaps, if the truth was known, he was not sorry to have it settled thus. For though he saw Jenny but little now, somehow her sweet face had become necessary to his happiness, and the chance of speaking even with her daily, for a few minutes, was worth remaining for, he said to himself.

He had been first attracted by the marked difference between her treatment of aunt Kitty, and the demeanor of Lydia toward the good, but eccentric old lady. Horace Milton had seen the world, and knowing, by experience, how much Europeans differed from Americans, and metropolitan populations from rural ones, held at their true value the mere conventionalisms of life. It was nothing to him, therefore, that aunt Kitty dressed in an old-fashioned style, while she had a shrewd mind and a good heart, as he saw very soon she had. For he was no shallow fop, and so his travels, instead of making him a conceited worshipper of foreign follies, had only made him a wiser man and a better republican. He had detected, at the outset, the vast superiority of Jenny over her cousin. Certain supercilious remarks made by the latter on the former had enlisted his sympathies for the dependant orphan also. It is but a step, some one has said, from pity to love. Be this true or not, Horace Milton, who could have won the richest in the land, found himself becoming deeply interested in Jenny, and was glad, therefore, of the privilege to study her character better, by remaining in the same house with her.

Jenny stood the ordeal well, though unconscious of what was going on. Her gentleness, forethought, patience, self-reliance, and other genuine womanly qualities, which made her really a "jewel above price," came out during that season of sickness, in a way that they never could, perhaps, under any other circumstances. Horace saw her sweetness continue unabated, though it might well have been excused failing, such was the invalid's irritability. He saw how tenderly she assured the father, who naturally

was deeply anxious for his only child, faulty as Mr. Somers knew her to be in many respects. He also heard, from aunt Kitty, frequent anecdotes of Jenny, unconsciously narrated by the old lady, who in the fullness of her heart, declared that "the dear girl was an angel and nothing else."

At last Lydia was able to come down stairs. But instead of being chastened by her illness, she was, if possible, more overbearing than before. Horace's blood boiled sometimes to see how Jenny was treated. He resolved, therefore, to remove the dear girl, as soon as possible, into a home of her own, if she was not indifferent to him, as he began to flatter himself now that she was not. Miss Lydia's folly and injustice did everything that was possible to ruin her plans: for the reader has long seen that she had set her heart, or rather enlisted her vanity, for that would be the more accurate phrase, in securing Horace for herself.

Jenny's secret dream, though scarcely aware of it herself, was to live on, worshipping Horace, and thus sweetening her dependant lot. That he should ever love her had never, in her wildest fancies, crossed her mind as possible. Occasionally, indeed, a look, or the tone of his words, would thrill her to the soul; and, for an instant, strange hopes would flush her cheek: but the absurdity of such expectations would immediately suggest themselves, and she would feel humbled all day afterward for what she considered her folly. When, therefore, she heard Horace actually ask her to be his, she thought,

for a moment, that he was mocking her; but his earnest tones, and the tremulous voice assured her; and bursting into tears she fled for refuge to his bosom, hiding her sweet face there, crimsoned with a thousand blushes.

Lydia, when she heard of the engagement, nearly went into hysterics. That she would not remain to witness the wedding she resolved at once; so she pretended that her health absolutely required she should go travelling; and Mr. Somers, deceived by her assurances, consented to her going South with a party of friends.

In one of the New York papers, the other day, we read the following announcement: "Married, on the 20th inst., by the Right Rev. Bishop Wainwright, Horace Milton, Esq., and Miss Jenny Vernon, all of this city."

Aunt Kitty has gone home delighted. But she has the promise of the happy pair, that when they return from Europe, whither they have just sailed, they will visit her at her quiet home. And they will keep their word, we have no doubt.

Every fine day, aunt Kitty's leg-of-mutton sleeves, poke bonnet, and faded, black cotton umbrella may be seen going about her village, as she pays a visit to some neighbor to tell of the wonders of the Crystal Palace.

No one despises her, in that quiet little place, for all know her solid worth. Besides the inhabitants there are above judging people by dress merely. They know, with Burns, that

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's, the gowd for a' that."

THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CHAPTER I.

A LARGE travelling carriage drawn by four grey horses toiled up an ascent of the mountains some twenty miles back of Catskill. It was a warm day in September, and though the load which those fine animals drew was by no means a heavy one, they had been ascending the mountains for more than two hours, and now their sleek coats were dripping with sweat, and drops of foam were scattered like snow-flakes along the dusty road as they passed upward. The carriage contained four persons, a gentleman some years past the meridian of life, tall, sinewy and somewhat spare in form, and a lady of very uncertain age, very slender, very fair, but faded, and with a sort of restless self-complacency in her countenance which seemed ever on the alert to make itself recognized by those about her.

The gentleman had been reading, or rather holding a book before his face, but it would seem rather an excuse for not keeping up the incessant talk, for conversation it could not be called, which the lady had kept in constant flow all the morning, than from any particular desire to read.

True, he did now and then glance at the book, but much oftener his fine, deep eyes were looking out of the carriage window and wandering over the broad expanses of scenery that began to unfold beneath them as the carriage mounted higher and higher up the mountains. Sometimes, when he appeared most intent on the volume, those eyes were glancing over it toward a little, wan face opposite, that began to blush and half smile whenever the thoughtful but kindly look of those eyes fell upon it.

The carriage at last reached a platform on the spire of a mountain ridge where the road made a bold curve, commanding one of the finest views, perhaps—nay, we will not have perhaps, but certainly—in the civilized world.

You should have seen that little, pale face then, how it sparkled and glowed with intelligence, nay, with something more than intelligence. The deep, grey eyes lighted up like lamps suddenly kindled, the wide but shapely

mouth broke into a smile that spread and brightened over every feature of her face. She started forward, grasped the window-frame, and glanced out with a look of such eager joy that the gentleman, who was gazing upon her, glanced down at his book with a well pleased smile, "I thought so—I was sure of it. She feels all the grandeur, all the beauty," he said to himself, inly, but to all appearance intent on his book. "Now let us see how the others take it."

"Isabel, Isabel, look out—look, look," whispered the child we have mentioned, with that sort of wild earnestness peculiar to persons of vivid imaginations, when once set on fire with some beautiful thing that God has created. "Look out, Isabel, I do believe that yonder, yonder, you see, is heaven."

"Heaven," cried the child spoken to, starting forward and struggling to reach the door, "heaven and mamma; oh! Mary, mamma—mamma——"

Mary fell back in her seat, pale and frightened by the effort of her enthusiasm.

"Where? what is it? Where—where?" cried the little Isabel, struggling to the carriage window, and half throwing herself out, while she gazed eagerly around, while Mary shrunk back into her corner of the front seat, as we have said, pale and heart-struck with the effect of her words.

"There is nothing, I can see nothing but hills, corn lots and the sky," said the beautiful child, drawing back and looking at Mary with her great, reproachful eyes half full of tears.

"Oh, Isabel, I did not mean that, not the real heaven, where your—where our mother is—but it was so beautiful down yonder, the sky and all, I could not help saying what I did."

Isabel drew back to her seat half petulant, half sorrowful; she was not really child enough to think that Mary could have spoken of heaven as a place actually within view; still it was not strange that the thought had for a moment flashed across her brain. Heaven itself could not have seemed more strange to those children than the magnificent mountain scenery through which they were passing. Born in the city of

New York, too young and too poor for those excursions that give more fortunate children glimpses of God's universe as he leaves it, fresh and unshackled by man's industry, they were thrown for the first time among the most beautiful scenery that man ever dreamed of, unprepared, and with all their wild, young ideas afloat. Is it wonderful then that an imaginative child like Mary should have cried out the name of heaven in her admiration, or that Isabel, only three weeks an orphan, should have sent forth the cry of mother, mother, from the depths of her poor little heart when she heard the heaven mentioned, where she believed that mother was longing for her child?

She sat down cowering close in a corner of the seat, and in order to conceal her tears turned her face to the cushions.

"Sit up," the lady interposed, "my beauty sit up; don't you see how your pretty marabouts are being crushed against the side of the carriage. Nonsense, child, what can you be crying about?"

"My mother, oh, she made me think of my mother. I thought—it seemed as if she must be there."

The lady frowned and looked toward the gentleman with a pettish movement of the head. "Be quiet, child, I am your mother now: remember that, I am your mother."

Isabel looked up and gazed through her tears, through the pale, characterless face bent in weak displeasure upon her.

"I am your mother," repeated the lady, in a tone that she intended to be impressive, while it was only snappish; "your benefactress, your more than mamma; forget that you ever had any other."

"I can't, oh, dear, I never can," cried the child, bursting into a passion of tears, and casting her face back upon the cushions.

Mrs. Farnham seized the child by the shoulder, and placed her with a slight shake upright.

"Stop crying, I never could endure crying children," she said. "Besides, see how you have crushed the pretty Leghorn flat for which you are so ungrateful. Better be thanking heaven that I ever took it into my head to take you from that miserable poor-house, than fly in the face of Providence in this manner, crushing Leghorn flats and marabout feathers that cost me mints of money, as if they were found by the city."

"She did not mean to spoil the feathers, ma'am, it was all my fault," said Mary Fuller, "Isabel loved her poor mother so much!"

"And am not I her mother? Can't you children let the poor woman rest in her pine coffin at Potter's Field, without tormenting me with all

this sobbing and crying? Remember my little lady, it is not too late yet, a few more scenes like this and it is an easy matter to send you back where I took you from. Then perhaps you will find it worth while to cry after this mother a little."

The two little girls looked at each other through their tears. Perhaps at the moment they thought of the infant's hospital, where Mrs. Farnham had found them, with something of regret. The contrast of a carriage cushioned with velvet and four superb horses, had not impressed them as it might have done older persons. Shut up with strangers, timid with hearts full of regret, they had not found the change for which Mrs. Farnham expected them to be so grateful, so happy as she fancied.

Up to the hour we mention they had kept their places demurely and in silence, drawing their little feet up close to the seats fearful of being found in the way, and stealing their little hands together now and then with a silent clasp, which spoke a world of feeling to the noble man who sat watching them over his book.

He had watched the scene we have described in silence, and with a sort of philosophical thoughtfulness, using it as a means of studying the souls of those two little girls. When Mrs. Farnham ceased speaking and turned to him for concurrence in her mode of drawing out the affections of her protegee, and settling the preliminaries of a life-time for that little soul, he only answered by leaning from the window and calling out,

"Ralph, draw up and let the horses have a rest under the shadow of this high rock. Come, children, get out, and let's take a look around us: your little limbs will be all the better for a good run among the underbrush."

Suiting the action to his words, Judge Sharp sprang from the carriage, took Isabel in his arms, set her carefully down, and then more gently, and with a touch of tenderness, drew Mary Fuller forward, and folded her little crooked form to his bosom.

"We will leave you to rest in the carriage, Mrs. Farnham," he said, with off-hand politeness, as if studying that lady's comfort more than anything on earth. "We will see what wild flowers can be found among the rocks. Take care of yourself; that's right, Ralph, let the horses wet their mouths at this little brook. Now, Isabel, let's see which will climb this rock first, you or little Mary and I."

Isabel's eyes brightened through her tears. There was something in the cordial goodness of Judge Sharp that no grief could have resisted.

"Please, sir," said Mary, struggling faintly in the arms of her noble friend—"please, sir, I can walk very well."

"And I can carry you very well—why not? Come, now for a climb."

And away strode the great-hearted man, bearing the little deformed one against his bosom, and holding her up that she might gaze on the scenery over his shoulder.

Isabel followed close, helping herself up the steep rocks, now by catching hold of a spice-bush and shaking off all its ripe, golden blossoms; now drawing down the loops of a grape-vine, and swinging forward on it, encouraged in each new effort by the hearty commendations of her new friend.

At last they reached the summit of a detached ridge of rocks that rose like a fortification back of the highway. Judge Sharp sat down upon a rocky shelf cushioned like an easy-chair with the greenest moss, and placed the children at his feet.

A true lover of nature himself, he did not speak, or insist upon forcing exclamations of delight from the two children who shared the glorious view with him. But he looked now and then into Mary Fuller's face, and was satisfied with all that he saw there.

Now and then he glanced also into the beautiful eyes of little Isabel. They were wandering dreamily from object to object, searching, as it were, along the misty horizon for some sign of her dead mother. It was her heart rather than her intellect that searched among that magnificent scenery for something to dwell upon.

"Are you sure, sir?" said Mary Fuller, timidly, looking up. "Are you quite sure that this is the same world that Isabel and I were in yesterday?"

"Why not? Doesn't it seem like the same?"

"No," answered Mary, kindling up and looking eagerly around, "it is a thousand times larger, so vast, so grand, so— Pray help me out, I wish to say so much and can't. Something chokes me here when I try to say how beautiful all this seems."

Mary folded her little hands over her bosom, and began to waver to and fro on the moss seat, struck with a pang of that exquisite pleasure which so closely approaches pain where genius exists.

"You like this?" said the judge, watching her face more than the landscape, that had been familiar to him when almost a wilderness.

"I should like to stay here forever. The sky away off yonder falling close down upon the mountains, it seems as if all that we ever loved, Isabel, were sure to be found somewhere back of that."

"It is a noble view," said the judge, standing up, and pointing to the right. "Have you ever learned anything of geography, children?"

"A little," they both answered, glancing at each other as if ashamed of confessing to so much knowledge.

"Then you have heard of the Green Mountains yonder, they lie like thunder-clouds under the horizon?"

The children shaded their eyes, and looked searchingly at what seemed to them a dark embankment of clouds, and then Mary turned, holding her breath almost with awe, and took in with one long look the broad horizon, sweeping its circle of a hundred miles from right to left, till closed in by the mountain spur on which they stood.

Where distance leveled small inequalities of surface, and made great ones indistinct and cloudy, the whole aspect of the scenery took an air of high cultivation and abundant richness. Thousands and thousands of farms cut up and colored with their ripened crops; golden rye stubbles; hills white with buckwheat and rich with snowy blossoms; meadows, orchards, and groves of primeval timber all brightened with their luxuriant tints; those noble vallies and plains that open upon the Hudson. Deep into New York state, and far, far away among the mountains of New England the eye ranged, charmed and satisfied with a fulness of beauty.

Mary saw it, and all the deep feelings as vivid, but less understood in the child than the woman, swelled and grew rich in her bosom. Not a tint of those luxuriously colored hills ever left her memory—not a shadow upon those distant mountains ever died from her brain. It is such memories, vivid as painting, and bent upon the mind like enamel from childhood to maturity that feed and invigorate the soul of genius.

Enoch Sharp had been a man of enterprise. Action had ever followed quick upon his thought. Placed by accident in certain avenues of life, he had exerted strong energies, and a will firm as it was kindly, in doing all things thoroughly that he undertook; in any circumstances he would have been no ordinary man. Had destiny placed his field of action among scientific or literary men, he would have proved himself first among the foremost; as it was, much of the talent that would have distinguished him there, grew and thrived upon those domestic affections which were to him the poetry of life. Thrown into constant communion with Nature in her most noble aspects he became her devotee, and without study was more learned in all the beautiful things which God has created, than many a

celebrated savan who studies with his brain alone.

True to the uncarthed poetry lying in rich veins throughout his whole nature, Enoch Sharp sat keenly regarding the effect this grand panorama of scenery produced on the two children.

He looked on Isabel with her bright, half restless beauty with a smile of affectionate forbearance. There was nothing in her face to answer the glow and enthusiasm of his own nature.

But it was far otherwise with little Mary. His own deep, grey eye kindled as it perused her sharp features, so lighted up, as it were, with some inward flame. His heart warmed toward the little pauper—yes, that is the term even high-bred people apply to persons of her antecedents—and without uttering a word he stooped down and patted her head in silent approbation. The child had given him pleasure, for there is nothing more annoying to the true lover of Nature than want of sympathy, when the heart is in a glow of fervent admiration; alive with a feeling which is so near akin to religion itself, that we sometimes doubt where the dividing line exists which separates love of God from love of the beautiful objects he has created.

Thus it was that Mary with her plain face and crooked little person found her way to the great, warm heart of Enoch Sharp; and as he sat upon the rock a faint struggle arose in his bosom regarding her destination. An impulse to take her into his own house and cultivate the latent talent so visible in every gesture and look took possession of him, but his natural strong sense prevailed over this impulse. Many reasons which we will not pause to mention here arose and counselled with his heart, and he muttered thoughtfully—“Neither men nor women become great by carpeting their progress with velvet; real strength is tested by difficulties. Still I must keep an eye upon the girl.”

Isabel soon became weary of gazing on the landscape at her feet. Impatient of the stillness, she arose softly and moved to a ledge close by, under which a wild gooseberry bush drooped beneath a harvest of thorny fruit.

“That is right,” said Enoch Sharp, starting up, “let me break off a whole handful of the branches, they will make peace with Mrs. Farnham for leaving her in the carriage so long.”

Directly a heap of thorny branches purple with fruit lay at Isabel's feet, and Enoch Sharp was clambering up the rocks after some tufts of tall blue flowers that shed an azure tinge down one of the clefts; then a cluster of broke leaves tempted him on, while Mary Fuller stood eagerly watching his progress.

“Oh, see, see how beautiful: do look, Isabel, if he could only get up so high!” She broke off with an exclamation of delight. Enoch Sharp had glanced downward at the sound of her voice, and directed by the eager look which accompanied it, made a dart higher up the rock.

A mountain ash, perfectly red with great clusters of berries, shot out from a little hollow between two ledges, and overhung the place where Mr. Sharp had found foothold. As if its own wreath of berries were not enough, a bitter sweet vine had started up in the same hollow, and coiling itself around the slender tree, deluged it with a shower of golden clusters that mingled upon the same branch with the bright red fruit of the ash.

“Oh, was there ever on earth anything so beautiful?” cried Mary, disentangling the delicate ends of the vines flung down by her benefactor. “Oh, look, Isabel, look.”

She held up a natural wreath, to which three or four clusters hung like drops of burnt gold.

“See, only see!” and with this exclamation her little fingers wove a handful of the blue autumn flowers in with the berries and the long, slender leaves. “Let me put it around your hat, Isabel. Oh, Mr. Sharp, may I wind this around Isabel's hat: it is so pretty, I'm sure the lady will not mind?”

“Put it anywhere you like,” cried the kind man, holding on to a branch of the bitter sweet and swinging himself downward till the ash bent almost double. Directly it rushed back to its place, casting off a shower of loose berries and leaves that rattled around the girls in red and golden rain, and Mr. Sharp was by them again gathering up an armful of gooseberry branches, bitter sweet and ash, while he admired Mary's wreath at the same time.

“Come, now for a scramble down the hill,” he cried. “Here, let me go first, for we may all expect a precious blessing, and I fancy my shoulders are the broadest.”

The children looked at each other and the smiles left their lips. The “blessing,” with which he so carelessly threatened them was enough to quench all their gay spirits, and they crept on after their benefactor with dull and anxious faces.

“See, Mrs. Farnham, see what a world of beautiful things we have found for you up the mountain,” cried Mr. Sharp, throwing two or three branches through the carriage window. “The little folks have discovered wonders among the brush—don't you think so?”

Mrs. Farnham drew back and gathered her ample skirts nervously about her.

"What on earth have the creatures brought? Bitter sweet, gooseberries, with thorns like darning-needles. Why, Mr. Sharp, what can you mean by bringing the things here to stain the cushions with?"

"Oh, never mind the cushions," answered the gentleman, lifting Isabel up with a toss and landing her on the front seat, while Mary stood trembling by his side, with her eyes fixed ruefully on the wreath which surrounded the crown of her companions Leghorn flat. "Oh, what will become of us when she sees that?" thought the child, in dismay.

But she was allowed no time to ask unpleasant questions even of herself, for Enoch Sharp took her in his arms and set her carefully down directly before Mrs. Farnham, whose glance had just taken in the unlucky wreath.

"My goodness, if the little wretches have not destroyed that love of a hat with their trash. Oh, dear, put a beggar on horseback and only see how he will ride. Mr. Sharp, I did hope that the child of my choice could appreciate an article of millinery like that; but you see how it is—pauper tastes—a long course of refinement is, I fear, necessary to a just comprehension of the beautiful. Only think, two of Malherbes' most expensive marabouts crushed into nothingness by a good-for-nothing heap of I don't know what tangled about them. Really, it is enough to discourage one from ever doing a benevolent act again."

Mr. Sharp strove to look decorously concerned, but spite of himself a quiet smile would tremble at the corners of his mouth, as he looked at the two marabout feathers flattened and crushed beneath the impromptu wreath.

"Whose work is it? Which of you twisted that thing over those feathers?" cried the lady, angrily.

Isabel looked at Mary, but did not speak.

"It was me; I did it," said Mary, meekly. "The berries were so pretty, we never saw any before. Please, ma'am, look again, and say if the blue flowers there against the yellow don't look beautiful."

"Beautiful, indeed! What should you know of beauty, I wonder?" was the scornful answer,

for Mrs. Farnham was by no means pleased that the little, deformed child had been forced into her company even for a single day's travel. "What on earth possesses a child like you, brought up—no matter where, to speak of this or that thing as pretty? What beautiful thing can you ever have seen?"

"I have seen the sky, ma'am, when it was full of bright stars. God lets poor people as well as rich ones look on the sky, you know; and isn't that beautiful?"

"Indeed! You think so, then?" said the lady.

"And we have seen many, many beautiful things beside that, haven't we, Isabel? One night, when it had been raining, in the winter—I remember it, oh, how well—while the great trees were dripping wet, out came the moon and stars brighter than ever, with a sharp frost, and then all the tops were hung with ice, in the moonlight, shining and bending low toward the ground, just as if the starlight had all settled on the limbs and was loading them down with their brightness. Oh, ma'am, I wish you could have seen it. I remember the ground was all one glare of ice; but I didn't mind that."

"I'm afraid your friend will find the pet you bring her rather forward, Mr. Sharp," said the lady, as Mary Fuller drew back, blushing at her own eager description.

"I really don't know," answered the gentleman, "she seems to have made pretty good use of the few privileges awarded to her, and, really, there is some philosophy in it. When one finds nothing but God's sky unmonopolized, it is something for a child to make so much of that. She has a pretty knack of sorting flowers, too, as you may see by the fashion in which that is twisted. After all, madam, let us each make the most of our choice. Your's is pretty enough, in all conscience. Mine will give satisfaction where she goes, I dare say."

Mr. Sharp was becoming rather weary of his companion again, and so leaned out of the window, as was his usual habit, amusing himself by searching for the first red leaves among the maple foliage, and watching the shadows as they fell softly down the hemlock hollows.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MAKING ACQUAINTANCES AT SARATOGA.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

THE perfume of summer flowers mingled with that of French extracts, the breeze of summer evening with that of French fans, and the spell of summer stars with that of French airs and graces—Miss Cornelia Hall's first evening at Saratoga had begun. The gay music bounded through the air, Mrs. Hall recognized several of her daughter's former acquaintances with several very motherly bows, and was all that could be desired to two or three new introductions. The young lady did credit to herself and dancing master in Mazourkas and Redowas without number.

"Who is that pretty girl in blue?" murmured the dandies.

"A daughter of Mr. Richard Hall—a broker in Wall street."

"Is she rich?"

"Well, her father is pretty well off, I believe, and she's the only daughter."

"A dozen brothers, though, I suppose."

"No, only three."

"Only three! I think it won't pay."

"There's a fellow that thinks it will, if I'm not mistaken—that handsome one with a moustache. He hasn't taken his eyes off her for half an hour."

"Know his name?"

"Armstrong, some one said, from the South."

"Who knows him?"

"Nobody, so far as I see."

On sped the flirtation-winged hours. Cornelia Hall put her hair in papers that night, with many a thought of honeyed words and earnest glances, twining with the golden locks, and around the twisted rolls of the Morning Herald.

There is nothing like a game at billiards, or a chance joining in a julp, to break down the barriers between the lords of creation. Mr. Armstrong, whom no one knew the night before, had plenty of acquaintances before he had lost three games of billiards; and when he adjourned to the bar-room, and treated the company, there were at least a dozen who pronounced him "a first-rate fellow." Two or three of them volunteered introductions to whatever ladies he chose, and that evening, among others, he pointed out Miss Hall. The young lady curtsied and dropped her eyes—the gentleman bowed and fixed his upon

the golden ringlets. Miss Cornelia, congratulating herself on having made a desirable acquaintance, exhibited her conversational powers and her diamond rings to the best advantage. She danced with no one but Mr. Armstrong that evening—she promenaded with no one else—she had no eyes nor ears for any one but him. Her mother thought it sufficient at the end of the evening to inquire his name. Armstrong—it sounded very well—it wasn't too handsome. If it had been St. Leger, or Fitzallen, or some romantic name that didn't sound as if it would be *good* in Wall street, she might have asked more questions; but as it was she bowed very graciously as she passed him on her way to the spring the next morning. Both "ma" and "pa" were very polite to Mr. Armstrong—even Mr. Richard Hall, jr., a youth in all the stiffness of his first standing collar, risked that and his neck by condescending nods. Miss Hall took long rambles with a cottage-hat and Mr. Armstrong—received bouquets and borrowed books from him, and altogether was on quite familiar terms with him. If Mr. and Mrs. Hall had been asked who was the young man with whom their daughter was so intimate, they would have been puzzled to tell. Mr. Armstrong talked of the South and his father's plantation, but only in a general way. There were some gentlemen, however, with whom Cornelia danced and flirted who "had not the honor of her mother's acquaintance," and Mr. Armstrong was very attentive to the old lady.

Time goes as fast at Saratoga as anywhere else, and money a little faster, Mr. Hall thought. After Miss Cornelia had "chased the glowing hours with flying feet" for three weeks, her father came to the conclusion that it was only at home she could really catch them. She coaxed and pouted, but all to no avail, so she told her beaux that they were going home to prepare for a trip to Niagara. She bade farewell to Mr. Armstrong with an elegantly worded invitation to call upon her in New York, gave him her address, and was gone.

The Halls returned to Twenty-first street, shut up the front part of the house and lived in the back—the ladies stealing out of the basement door in thick, green veils to take a walk before nine o'clock, for they would not for anything

have had it known that they were at home at this unfashionable season, when all the world and his wife were out of town.

One morning in November, soon after the brown Holland had disappeared from the parlor, and the rust from the door-plate, Miss Cornelia was lounging in a rocking-chair with a novel, when a pull at the bell, easily recognized as given by a very tightly gloved hand, was followed by the advent of a card—Mr. Frederic Armstrong. The waiter was despatched to shut the parlor doors, so that Miss Cornelia could get up stairs to dress, and then Mr. Armstrong was received with a sliding courtesy of the newest mode. Cornelia thought him handsomer than ever, and they were soon deep in the reminiscences of Saratoga. Precisely at the right time Mrs. Hall glided in, all smiles and Turc-satin.

"Was Mr. Armstrong making a long visit in town?"

"It is uncertain, madam," replied that gentleman, "if I consulted my wishes only," with a look at Miss Cornelia, "I should have no difficulty in deciding."

After ten or fifteen minutes of fashionable dialogue, Mr. A. drew on his sulphur gloves, and said, "Mrs. Hall, I believe we are to have Puritani at the opera to-morrow night. May I not have the pleasure of accompanying yourself and daughter there?"

Mrs. Hall bowed assent in the most approved manner, and the door closed behind Mr. Armstrong and his patchouli.

"My dear," said Mrs. Hall to her daughter, the next evening, "get your work or a book. Don't let it seem to Mr. Armstrong as if you were sitting waiting for him. It looks better to be taken by surprise a little."

Miss Cornelia had just time to take up her crochetwork, when the compound of white cravat and black moustache was ushered into the room. Did he see the rocking-chair still moving from which she had sprung to throw herself in a graceful attitude on the sofa?

Mrs. Hall was the paragon of chaperons. No one ever suspected how much of the success of Cornelia's flirtations was owing to her mother's tact. She was never in the way, and never out of the way when her presence was desirable. She knew how apt people are to value any one as they see others value them, and she often spoke of her daughter highly and affectionately. She sat that evening in the opera box, appearing at all necessary times completely absorbed in the music, never interrupting a whispered conversation, and appealing to her daughter with "Cornelia, my love, see here a moment," when-

ever there appeared to be an embarrassing pause.

The curtain fell at last, and Miss Cornelia, all in a flutter of gratified vanity, consigned her pearl-mounted lorgnette to her companion, and taking his arm, returned the bows of her acquaintances very condescendingly. Mr. Armstrong soon became Miss Hall's constant attendant at all public places, accompanied her in her walks, carried her prayer-book to church for her, was always invited when her mother had company, and at Christmas she accepted from him a very splendid and very useless fancy work-box. One evening, soon after New Year, he came in and was introduced to her brother Henry, who had just returned from a long journey.

After half an hour's conversation, Cornelia turned round and found Henry gazing so intently at the gentleman as evidently to ruffle his composure. She tried to tread on her brother's toes under the table, and wondering after many such admonitions that he did not look up, found it was Mr. Armstrong's foot she had been treading on. She tried in vain to catch her brother's eye. Then he began to talk to Mr. Armstrong in a curious sort of quizzing way, with a mocking smile on his lips. Cornelia could not understand the drift of half of his remarks and questions, and only saw that they made Mr. A. very uncomfortable. She made an excuse to leave the room, and ran to her mother with, "Ma, I wish you'd call Henry out of the parlor. He's behaving so rudely to Mr. Armstrong, that I'm sure he'll make him very angry."

Mrs. Hall got Henry away, and he did not return till Mr. Armstrong had taken his departure.

"Well, sis, I hope you've had a pleasant evening. What's the gentleman's name?" he said, throwing himself on the sofa, and indulging in a prolonged fit of laughter.

"I wish you would learn to behave yourself properly, Henry. It's Mr. Armstrong, from the South."

"Oh! from the South, is he?" and Henry laughed again till he cried.

"What do you mean, Henry?" said his mother.

"Mean? oh! nothing! Where did you become acquainted with him, sis?"

"At Saratoga."

"Oh, ho! changed his coat at Saratoga, did he?"

"Henry, do conduct yourself reasonably; if you know anything about Mr. Armstrong, tell it, and don't laugh so foolishly."

"If I know anything, mother. Do you know anything? Come now, anything?"

"Yes, we have every opportunity to know. He has visited here some time. He is a very gentlemanly and agreeable young man."

"Do you know anything of his family?"

"No, he is a stranger in the city."

"Mother, don't make me die with laughing. Shall I tell you who he is?"

"Who?"

"My hair-dresser."

Cornelia screamed. Mrs. Hall dropped her book upon the floor. "Are you in earnest?" she said.

"Most certainly. I did not know him at first,

his whiskers and moustache alter him so much, but when I looked sharp, I could not be mistaken. The fellow's assurance and impudence are really amusing. Step round in Fourth Avenue and you'll see his father's sign. This youngster isn't in the shop all the time, but he has cut my hair often. And so he's been beaung you to the opera and all around. Oh, Cornelia, Cornelia, this is making acquaintances at Saratoga!"

The young lady went into hysterics on the sofa. The next time Mr. A. called she was "not at home."

THE BRIDE OF THE SENATOR.

BY M. F. ANDREWS.

CHAPTER I.

"PLEASE, sister Victorine, now do tell me where Missolonghi is. I have looked and looked every map all over for it, and I can't find it. I was reading to-day in the book that Eva gave me, for getting my lessons well, about the sweet, beautiful flowers that grew there, and about the birds and everything. And I want to get my lesson before she comes back. Please, sister, dear sister, now do."

And the boy stood close beside her, with his map in his hand, and with his large, blue eyes fixed pleadingly on the cold face of the lady addressed. She did not lift her eyes from the page of her book, but answered, pettishly,

"Do not disturb me, Willie, I am reading. I know nothing about Missolonghi, and care less. Go to some one else."

The boy looked at his sister a moment, and the tears came into his eyes, and the grieved lip quivered that replied,

"I should not have come to you, but Eva is gone, as she would have told me. She always helps me find the places."

"Why, Willie, Willie," spoke the mother, reprovingly, while with complacent satisfaction she regarded her heartless daughter, "I am really astonished. Why *did* you go to her, she is so nervous, and interrupt her when she is reading too. Never, never do so again."

The child looked at his sister to see if his artless request, his simple words did seem to have any effect upon the delicate girl. But she was all absorbed in the exciting work she was reading. Then he looked at his mother to see if she really was in earnest, and then, with the bright tears still in his beautiful eyes, he bent them upon old uncle John, who sat gazing upon the listless lady, with the corners of his mouth drawn down with the most supreme contempt. But, as he caught the sad eye of Willie, this expression faded, and with a kind and gentle look for the disappointed boy, he said,

"Come here, Willie, I will find Missolonghi for you," and he laid down the newspaper he had been holding for the last half hour.

"Why, uncle John, you are reading," was hesitatingly answered. "You don't like to be

disturbed, do you, when you are reading?" And then he whispered, as the old man was looking closely upon the map, "Eva will always find my places for me, or help me with my sums, or do anything I ask her to, though she is studying, or reading, or drawing, or painting, or practising, or anything else."

The listener bent his face close to the map,

"There, Willie." And he pointed to the place.

"Why, uncle John, is it there? I thought I had looked everywhere for it." And his voice, now wild with joy, as he placed his finger upon the name. "Thank you, thank you, uncle John, oh, I am so glad."

"There, dear Willie, is the place where Lord Byron died."

The boy looked up inquiringly into his face, and then returned,

"Yes, sir, I know. Eva told me. I am so glad you have found it for me." And gathering up his map, with a light step he left the apartment.

Victorine Ashland closed her book and flung it impetuously upon the table, and languidly observed,

"How noisy Willie is. How very annoying it is. I have read the last half page over half a dozen times, and know no better what it contains than I did before I looked at it."

The mother looked anxiously upon her idol.

"I know he is noisy; but you are fatigued, my dear child. You have exerted yourself too much this morning. You had better go to your room until dinner is ready. You shall not be disturbed."

"She had better go into the kitchen, and get dinner," uncle John said, with some bitterness, as she left the room.

Mrs. Ashland looked at him in surprise.

"Uncle John, you are deranged. Do you in reality think that delicate being could endure the fatigue of cooking a dinner?"

"A far more healthy and salutary exercise than reading trashy books, that awakens, that calls forth all the sympathies and sensibilities of a wasted mind for the false and untrue, while the real and every day wants of life are selfishly set aside. Your daughter's answer to Willie was a sad specimen of this."

"But, she is so delicate and nervous, I do not

like to have her feelings disturbed; it almost always makes her ill. She cannot endure anything."

"And what, Mrs. Ashland, what makes her the nerveless and useless thing that she is?" And uncle John spoke with calm severity. "Yourself, madam. She has been a favorite child, and you have spoiled her; and never, never now will her weakened and imbecile mind attain that true formation and that innate strength, well regulated and rightly directed, that was originally its portion, its birth-right inheritance, unless some mighty change takes place, some deep affliction to wake, as from the dead, the native energies slumbering there, will she, like the prodigal son, return. Only in that is there any hope for her."

Mrs. Ashland's face was crimson. But she answered as calmly as her excited feelings would allow her. She did not care to offend uncle John. She knew that they were dependent upon him for many favors, and often even for pecuniary assistance.

"My daughter, I trust, sir, will not need your advice upon this subject. Her education, which is highly superior, has been finished in this home."

"Highly superficial, madam, would be more like the truth." And there was a lurking scorn in his words. And then he resumed, with the stern seriousness so characteristic of him. "She has been taught some few of the showy and flimsy accomplishments of the day, such as may be attracting in a ball-room assembly, such as win the admiration of the exquisite, such as might captivate the lover, such as might find favor with the fashionable. That is all."

"My daughter, sir," quickly answered Mrs. Ashland, "has had an education that but few can boast of. And yet not so thoroughly scientific, perhaps, as it would have been had her physical powers been stronger, had her constitution been less delicate. She cannot endure what Eva can."

"And what, may I ask," was continued, solemnly, "what has made her the weak and imbecile being that she is? She has been your idol. Her life has been one of self-indulgence. Your own blind partiality could not bear that she should ever be crossed or thwarted in one single thing, or feel one moment's uneasiness. She must have her own will and way. Her life has been all of romance and self-indulgence. And an undue self-indulgence, of whatever nature, when long continued in and yielded to, wholly unfits the mind for self-exertion, that self-exertion and self-reliance that will render it strong, hardy and vigorous, and not the weak, puny and

sickly thing that this insidious and excessive excitement renders it.

"Victorine has yielded herself to this excitement, this intoxication, and now she is languid, wretched and irritable unless surrounded by company, or has some witching work to call forth her sympathies and sensibilities on which to expend them; but not for objects of charity, for real suffering, for life as it is."

"Oh, no, sir," the lady answered, and still with an offended air, "Victorine is so very, very affectionate. She always kisses me when going away for any length of time, and when returning. Eva, your favorite, though learned in all the arts and sciences, never does this. She has not half as much depth of feeling and tenderness of heart, after all, as Victorine."

"Eva's feelings are better disciplined, better controlled. Her affections are awakened for reality, not romance. Her's is a self-nerving spirit. She has learned to discriminate between the false and the true. She is all artless, and innocent, and pure. She is not affectation, form and ceremony. Oh, how early can the mind be biased and bent, how early it can be made a wreck of, with its strength and vitality forever destroyed. The feelings of Eva are deep and hidden. Those of Victorine are wholly upon the surface. Her sensibilities and sympathies are called forth for the imaginary. I have seen her weep over the high-wrought ideas of the painter and the poet; but the suffering that is all around she heeds it not. I am speaking plainly, Mrs. Ashland, and would ask your pardon for thus doing, but it is all in kindness. A mother's blind partiality for her children renders her disregarding of very many defects that ought to be timely corrected. And you was speaking of Victorine's manifest affection for yourself; and yet, how much of it is mockery, is a romantic foible. Two years ago, Mrs. Ashland, you were ill for some weeks of a fever. And who cared for you, who ministered to you, who watched by your bed-side then? Which of your daughters exhibited the most true affection, manifested the most love for you then? Two years ago and Eva was but a child. And yet, and yet, hour after hour she watched by your bed-side. For long weeks she was there a ministering angel. She was there anticipating your every want and wish, and thus revealing to you her heart by a thousand little nameless attentions, and by the winning kindness, and gentle thoughtfulness and holy love which is wealth far more to be prized than the kiss of mockery. And where then, was Victorine? Still feeding her wayward and morbid mind on the most

exciting fictions of the day. Her treasure was there, and where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. And this is the test of the true character. And yet she meets you with a kiss. And the very next moment will speak unkindly to you, will be angry if you cross her in a single thing."

"And yet, uncle John," Mrs. Ashland replied, "you know that Victorine is so delicate. She could not have done as Eva did. It would have been impossible."

"And what has made her the helpless and useless thing that she is. An unhealthy stimulant for the young and unformed mind. Victorine does not exert herself enough. Her life has been all of light. She knows not of trial, even by name; knows not that without trial there will be no patience; without suffering and affliction no resignation. On the other hand, the mind of Eva has been trained by thought and action; by a discipline well calculated to unfold its perceptive and active powers. And now, she must, or does, voluntarily take the charge of the children's lessons while she is pursuing her own studies; all to save expense. Well she knew that her father's circumstances are limited; and well she knew that Victorine's expenses for ball outfits and party costumes have almost taken the bread from their mouths. And, in all this, the love of your children is shown. The one must be ministered unto, the other must sacrifice all. The one lives upon excitement, the other seeks enjoyment in doing her duty. The one seeks to relieve you of domestic care, and by a thousand little attentions and duties to lessen their burden; the other selfishly pursues her own desires and inclinations, is peevish, irritable and ill-natured if the least thing occurs to perplex, if the slightest obstacle to vex her."

"And what responsibility rests with the mother," continued uncle John, "training her child for a future, for an eternity. Yet how little, seemingly, does she think of this. It is but too often her highest ambition to see her loved one dazzle, and shine, and enchant, to be honored and envied, to form a lofty alliance, to gain a splendid establishment; oftener this than that holy and inward teaching that tells of goodness and usefulness, the still small voice that whispers the way to holiness and to heaven. And thus is the daughter formed and fashioned; and thus are her children disciplined and educated. Now I trace domestic infelicity to this. To this, its unhappiness and its darkness. The lady marries for a brilliant establishment, and is wedded alone to that and its useless and frivolous accomplishments. And this the husband

learns too late for his peace. His angel wife is but a worhipper at the shrine of vanity, selfishness, fashion and ambition. He had looked on a future all fair with felicity. He had reared there a holy home altar, on the one pure shrine where all that was beautiful and immortal was to be offered. With a pang at his heart, he beholds that sacred and cherished spot desecrated by the breathings of coldness and unkindness. And no marvel that he turns away, sick at heart and discouraged. No marvel that the darkness of desolation is in that heart, is there within that home. And what are the offerings that the woman of fashion and the idle dreamer brings to the domestic altar shrine? Are they the truthful tokens of kindness, tenderness and holiness of heart and life? Nay, nay, but vanity, selfishness and helplessness. And the husband turns away, disappointed and disheartened, from a future of darkness, where life's light has forever set. But, well I know that this is not always the cause of domestic infelicity. Man, too, is many times to blame. And often the tender and shrinking flower he takes to his home but feels the breath of coldness and neglect, and soon, too delicate and fragile for this, it fades and droops and dies. And the world gazes upon the dead blossom and sees only the hand of some insidious disease there. The canker of the heart, its slow bleeding and wasting, is hidden forever from view."

And slowly the old man lifted his cane from the carpet and left the house.

Anger was the predominant feeling in the soul of the fond and mistaken mother. She was a vain, ambitious and selfish woman, and the position in which her marriage with Mr. Ashland placed her, served to strengthen instead of diminishing these characteristic qualities of the mind. They moved in the first circles, and the income of Mr. Ashland, though considerable, could scarcely suffice to keep them there, was scarcely enough for the wife's extravagancies.

And Eva, in her leisure moments, she often assisted her father with his accounts, and in many other ways. She knew much of his circumstances, and she, therefore, insisted upon taking charge of Willie's and Harry's lessons. And, as time passed on, her task seemed less arduous, her burden less heavy, as she had gained more strength to meet them. And the kind and encouraging words of her old uncle were ever her's. He had pointed out her path. He had told her there would be shadows by the wayside, that there would be darkness before her, but she must look to heaven for strength to meet it all.

Uncle John had sought his lodgings. There was a heaviness on his heart. He could not bear that Victorine Ashland should be the being of impassioned romance, of dreamy excitement, should love herself alone, without one thought of her duties, her responsibilities.

And alone, amid the solitude and silence of his own apartment, uncle John was living over again the life of his youth. And there was darkness there. He could see it all now. The midnight hour had come and gone, and still he sat there. And still he gazed upon a miniature that lay there before him upon the table that supported his arm. Low his head was bent, till his white locks touched the hallowed picture. It was of a young and beautiful girl, and so like life the likeness looked. The soft, blue eyes, the parted lips, through which you could almost feel the breathings of the heart tremble; the white, transparent brow, where every pale vein was plainly perceptible. Oh, it was a living likeness to him. But why gazes he upon that young girl, that man of three score years. Is it a daughter, an idol one, given back to God? No, not that. He was never married. He had passed on through life alone, alone. And yet how many prayers from the widow's heart, and the orphan's, had gone up to heaven for him. And ever to the poor, lone and forsaken, was he a friend and father. He was known to be very wealthy, yet at times strange and eccentric, yet never, never did the destitute, and desolate, and lowly find that he had forgotten them. And why, with all his generous sympathies alive and active, with all his noble and god-like feelings, with his kind and loving nature, did he ever remain single? His wounded heart could tell the answer. Away down in its deep depths the low, unforgotten voice of a past was present, whose hidden breathings was the sanctuary of all that was sacred and holy. Yes, and the voice of the early dead and the early lost, whose sweet, low strains, so sad, so mournful, would ever be calling through the desolate depths of his heart. And memory, oh, memory would echo o'er each one, till the wild, deep murmur, so sweet, so sacred and eternal, seemed like the bright spirit of the hours that had gone by forever.

And still the old man gazes upon that one cherished picture, and still he listens to the low whisperings of the past, whose numbers still steal on as if they awakened no wild echo in the soul, as if they brought no woe to the heart.

The past. He has wandered back over years, years, and he is there. Childhood and youth are lived over again. Childhood—what was it but all of self-indulgence? Youth—it was little else

than waywardness and selfishness. He was never taught his duty to earth, his responsibility to God. He was brought up to no profession. He was never taught self-dependence and self-exertion. He was instructed to respect the rich and despise the poor. And what knew he, or what cared he for the suffering and the sorrowing, for the woe that was all around him? He was the fragile son. His father's vast wealth supplied all his wants, and in that he would find his future happiness, not usefulness. He never thought of that. He had never been taught how much he owed to God—that all was His.

But the hour of an awakening was to be. A being of celestial loveliness, of rare and angel-like beauty crossed his path. His imagination thrilled wildly beneath the power of her charms. His dreamy fancy had found its idol ideal. His soul was lured to worship, and his heart offered all its homage to her. He sought to win her for his own. He did. He had never looked for a refusal. He had not thought that possible. Handsome, gifted, accomplished, wealthy, an alliance with him would be an honor. His own happiness was ever his first and only thought. Was it not now secured forever? What more could he wish on earth?

The day for the marriage was named. The day, the hour. But, ere they arrived, the beautiful betrothed was sleeping beneath the dark church-yard sod. And what a blow had struck to that thoughtless heart, which beat so high with hope and happiness. It felled him to the earth. And he arose from thence a changed being. And though the heart was still bleeding there was ever a holy purpose there. The soul was smitten but to be sanctified. And the holy spirit of God had written there its words that no other shadow could ever wholly obliterate.

And with what a vast reproach came up his past life to him—so useless and valueless. He knew that his Father had taken away his idol, had taken it home that his heart too might follow. And lowly and humbly he bent him to the all-wise mandate of Omnipotence. And now his life was spent in doing good, and in the study of human nature. Oh, how soon could his deep glance read the heart of each with almost omniscient correctness. It was to him a destiny.

He had ever shunned a public life. Honors had been offered him, but to be rejected. What cared he, so noble in nature, so lofty in soul, so holy in heart, what cared he for the hollow sound of fame, the praise, the plaudits of the many, the mocking admiration of the multitude?

He was often a visitor at Mrs. Ashland's; and his plain, just, sensible and unpolished remarks

but too often annoyed the proud mother and the delicate Victorine. And, though there was some policy in treating uncle John with a show of kindness, yet they were ashamed of him when their fashionable and particular friends were present. And his calm contempt of the false and unmeaning manner they assumed, told but too plainly that the heart of each was bared to his view.

CHAPTER II.

AND where was Eva? It was a festal night. A party of the *elite* of the city had been given in honor of the Honorable Henry Sherwood, who, with his private secretary, was to pass a few days in town.

And Eva enters her father's library.

"Mother and Victorine are all ready, you will be late," was the sweet, anxious tone, as she stood by her father's side.

"I cannot help it, my child. It will be some two hours yet before I can go. I have several papers to copy that must be done to-night." And he again bent his eye on the page before him.

"Oh, I can do them, father. I can copy them all, and so well, too, if you are not here to tell me," was said, pleadingly.

Mr. Ashland looked up into the sweet girl's face.

"Are you not going too, Eva?"

"No, no. I do not wish to. But, dear father, it will be late. And they will be so impatient; and, and—do you not wish very much to see the celebrated member of Congress that there is so much said about?"

"And have you no curiosity to behold the renowned Mr. Sherwood, Eva?" And Mr. Ashland smiled as he awaited a reply.

"No, no. I do not know. I will most likely have an opportunity before he leaves the place." And then was added, thoughtfully, "But I know he is all that is great and good and noble. His mind is majestic, and his intellect is lofty and proud. His eloquence, it is said, is irresistible, unapproachable. His words I have read with awe and admiration. They are on every living lip. They are sweetly stealing over the hearth-stones of our own free homes, and are thrilling back, in wild, deep echoes, through the land. The voice of genius speaks, and the world bends low to listen, to listen to the holy whisperings that are not of earth."

Mr. Ashland smiled at his daughter's unconscious enthusiasm, and resigned to her his seat at the table. Her pleadings had prevailed. And for long hours she pursued her lone, unwearying

task. It was long past the midnight hour ere it was finished. She laid the papers carefully away and left the room.

On her way to her own chamber, she entered the apartment of Willie and Harry. She bent down and kissed each slumbering one, and then stood gazing upon them. She knew not why, but tears came into her eyes, and a cold shudder over her heart. She turned away, and sought her own room. Late as it was, her prayer to heaven that night was longer than was its wont. For a weary weight lay heavily upon her feelings, and she looked up in hope to the Infinite One. She knew He would hear her cry, the one low prayer of the trusting heart. And as her aching head pressed the pillows, then there was the sweet and holy consciousness of divine protection.

It was late before the Ashlands made their appearance in those crowded saloons that night. The guests had all assembled. The wealth, the fashion, the aristocracy of the city were there to offer their homage to the distinguished Southern Senator, the Honorable Henry Sherwood.

Beautiful and queenly, indeed, looked Victorine Ashland as she entered the proud and brilliantly lighted apartments of one of the most imposing mansions of the city. A thrill of admiration passed through the crowd, and many a smile of welcome was called forth for her, for one so surpassingly lovely. Victorine gazed around. Where was him she most wished to see, the one bright star of the evening?

Soon her eye rested on the form of the noble stranger, in animated conversation with a party of ladies and gentlemen at some distance. Slowly he paced up the apartment, escorted by a town exquisite. And she was then duly introduced.

He was not the lofty-looking and elegant being she had expected to behold. But yet he was handsome and pleasing, and witty, and winning; and the charms and attractions of the fair Victorine seemed to win his attention and admiration more than any other one present. And another too—the secretary. Henry Sherwood was standing by the door as she came in, conversing with uncle John. Like a flash of light she had passed by him. He paused in his earnest discourse, and gazed involuntarily upon the exquisite loveliness of the brilliant belle. It was long. He knew not what his companion was saying, so bewildering seemed the vision that passed on by him. It was long. Uncle John's voice roused him from his dreamy reverie. He looked up into the old man's face, as if it were one he had often gazed upon, and loved, and revered.

And now, as he stands there looking up inquiringly into that aged face, while a faint flush passes over the white brow, and the dark eye is beautiful and mournful, and the pale lips slightly move, you can trace a true resemblance to the picture that uncle John wears so near his heart, that is so holy and so dear to him.

The secretary, it is said, is a distant relative of the member of Congress. The mother of the latter was the sister of the one that uncle John had laid, with all the hopes of a life, in yonder cold, dark grave-yard.

Yet all unlike in look and appearance was Henry Sherwood and his distinguished relative. He was tall and slight, with a graceful symmetry and winning majesty in every movement. His face was pale, and sad, his eyes were of the midnight darkness, yet beautiful and mournful. And his soft, shadowy hair was pushed carelessly back from a brow of feminine whiteness. His voice was low, bewildering and thrilling. Yet he conversed but little; he was reserved, almost silent. Probably because he was scarcely noticed. The adulation of the multitude was all for the renowned member of Congress.

With unaffected ease, and graceful politeness, the latter received the courteous advances of the admiring crowd, as if the heart is homage he had a right to win.

But how came uncle John in that fashionable assembly? He seldom attended a gathering like that, which odd, and quaint, and old-fashioned as he was, his position in society always gave him access to. And now, to-night, had he before met the secretary of the honorable gentleman. But of this none knew. Yet they conversed long together; and he, indeed, was almost the only one that in the least noticed the poor secretary.

And he, too, turned from uncle John that night to be nearer Victorine Ashland, who stood long by the side of the gifted stranger, who passed with him through the door, whose hand rested on his arm as they paced the apartment, who gave back in answer to his wish, the soft melodies of the harp, the sweet voices of the enchanted lyre.

Oh, who would have thought, as they gazed upon that brilliant and entrancing one that night, with her smile of light and look of sunshine, and listened to her tones of syren sweetness, that she could be the languid, listless, helpless, selfish, indolent and irritable being she was at home.

"And if the Honorable Mr. Sherwood should call," was said by Victorine, the morning after the party, "uncle John would be sure to be here. He always is when we have company. He is such an annoyance. He is so old-fashioned,

and always will say everything so, just to vex me."

"Uncle John," and Willie looked up earnestly into his sister's face. "Oh, I love uncle John, and so does Eva, and so does Harry, and so does everybody. Oh, I love uncle John. He is always so kind to me, and he found Missolonghi for me on the map, when I had looked ever so long for it."

"Willie," and Mrs. Ashland spoke reprovingly, "you should not interrupt your sister when she is talking." And turning to her daughter, added, "uncle John is a privileged person everywhere, and always says and does just what he pleases. Yet I do wish that when we have distinguished company that he would leave us alone. But he is very wealthy, you know, and it will not do to offend him."

"And if he is, it will never do us much good, I am thinking. And what is the use of bearing everything from him, and some besides, just for the sake of a little wealth, which, after all, we may never get. I am so ashamed of him when we have fashionable friends here, it half distracts me."

"But you know, dear, that he is always invited among the first, and it would lessen our chance of success there did we not tolerate him," was the half persuasive, half contemptuous reply of the mother.

And the Honorable Henry Sherwood *did* call, and uncle John *was* there, and the humble secretary came too.

And now, by the soft morning light you can gaze upon that face, and you can see plainly that it is like that likeness of uncle John's, and yet, perhaps, more pale and intellectual.

Uncle John was never tired of watching it, and he was almost the only one that noticed it at all. But the witty, pleasing and brilliant senator, thousands were bowing down to him.

The gaze of the great man is often fixed upon the lovely face of Victorine, yet he shares his conversation alike with all present, even uncle John, even his poor relative.

An agent for some benevolent society has come in with a subscription paper, which he invited them to look at and sign. Each are contributing what they please, all but uncle John. Whatever he gave was not thus to be made public. And Victorine traced her fair name there, and the sum of twenty-five dollars. Mrs. Ashland looked at it, and smiled blandly, and said,

"And you will be willing to do with one less new bonnet, or some other article of dress, this season, for the sake of giving this sum."

"Certainly, mother. It will give me more

pleasure to thus contribute my mite in a good cause, than to wear all the fashionable finery that our city can boast of."

"Victorine never thinks of herself." And Mrs. Ashland smiled graciously upon her guests. "She is ever so impulsive and generous."

"Fudge!"

Uncle John didn't utter this because Mr. Burchell had before him, but to show his honest contempt of the utter untruthfulness of the bold assertion he had just listened to.

Almost every night Victorine Ashland met Mr. Sherwood at some grand entertainment given in honor of him.

And now, to the many beautiful and accomplished ladies present, were his polite and courteous attentions dispensed. He seemed to prefer the presence of no particular one, but to enjoy and prize the society of each, alike.

All the art that Victorine possessed, all the skilful manœuvring of Mrs. Ashland were called forth to win and enslave the great man. But, as yet, to no purpose. And yet there were times when he sought her in preference to others. But she knew her charms had failed wholly to captivate him.

And where was Eva? As each festal night went by, copying for her father, or assisting the children in their lessons, or reading to them, or playing uncle John some of his favorite songs.

CHAPTER III.

"HEAVENS, Eva, what are you doing? You are not going to bring that dirty, ragged child in here, in the parlor. Mother, mother, just see; how can she? I shall faint." And the benevolent Victorine Ashland sank back upon the rich cushions of a sofa.

"Eva, Eva," Mrs. Ashland spoke reproachfully, bitterly, "take him away, now, this instant. I will not have that ugly object brought in here. It will kill your sister."

Eva paused with her burthen in the centre of the apartment, and looked up wistfully into that sister's face, and then in a low, pleading tone said, as her sweet glance was lifted to her mother's,

"Oh, mother, only just look. His arm is powerless; and it is bleeding so, too. And see how pale he is. He has fainted—he is dying. And what if it had been brother Willie; only think. You would not have him die in the street, mother?"

"Yes, rather than have him brought in here to kill your sister. You are ever so thoughtless. You never consider how delicate she is. But no

danger of his dying. Poor people's children never die."

The Honorable Henry Sherwood, and the secretary, entered the apartment. They had heard all. Mrs. Ashland looked confounded. The member of Congress politely apologized for the sudden intrusion. Eva had retreated from their gaze, and sank upon a seat.

"This child I saw playing, madam, in front of your house. A horse that became frightened and broke loose from the carriage, was passing rapidly down the street. The child saw him, and attempted to run; but too late. The horse knocked it down. In a moment I thought to reach the spot. But sooner than that, this young lady," and he bowed low to Eva, "was there, was kneeling there beside the wounded boy, and lifting him in her arms, entered your house. And can we render any assistance?"

Mortified, ashamed and embarrassed as Mrs. Ashland was, she blandly answered,

"Thank you, sir, you are very kind. But it was so very sudden and unexpected. I knew not what I said; and Victorine's health is so delicate, I feared for her. She can't endure anything. But Eva is so different; she never considers her sister's feelings."

Victorine half-reclined upon the sofa, languidly fanning herself. The consciousness of what she had said sent the burning crimson to her brow, for what would the great man think of her. Eva, pale as marble, still held the wounded child in her arms. The member of Congress stood gazing upon the group. The secretary had approached the seat of Eva, and kneeling beside her, took the boy's motionless hand within his own, and put back the matted hair from his forehead, and passed his hand over the colorless face. The child moved. A low moan trembled upon the silence there.

"Ally," Eva faintly articulated.

The child was the only son of a very poor, but respectable woman, and he had often been there. He had come when Willie and Harry were repeating their lessons, and Eva had learned him to read. There was no one on earth so dear to him as she was, except his mother.

"Ally, Ally," was again repeated.

The child looked up into her face, and clung closely to her.

The low, rich voice of the secretary, was heard,

"His arm is not broken, I think. Only the elbow joint is dislocated, and yet the flesh and chords seem very much bruised and crushed."

"Cannot a surgeon be immediately sent for?" said Eva, and, as she spoke, she met the gaze of the secretary, and turned her face away.

"The child had better be conveyed home first," quickly interrupted the mother.

"No, no, no," stole from the quivering lips of Eva. "His mother, you know, has been ill, and is only just able to work a little, and this will be too much for her. If his wounds could only be attended to before she knows it, it would less shock her."

Without waiting the mother's reply, the member of Congress despatched a servant for a surgeon. In a few moments he was there.

As he entered, Mrs. Ashland turned to Victorine, who, despite her nervous temperament, still continued to remain, and said, anxiously,

"Victorine, this is no place for you; you must retire. Your health will already suffer from the excitement of the scene. Go to your chamber for the present, as I shall to mine. I cannot bear the sight of suffering."

Victorine rose to obey. The honorable gentleman offered his arm to lead her from the apartment. She accepted it, with one of her sweetest, most bewitching smiles. The mother, too, bowed and smiled, and retired. She probably did not wish to listen to one moan of the unfortunate child. And Eva was alone with the gentlemen present.

"Lady, I will relieve you; I will hold the boy while his arm is examined," said the secretary, and his dark, yet softened, eyes were upon the face of the gentle girl.

The child looked up. He understood the words; and while he shrank yet closer to Eva, said, pleadingly, and his voice sounded like a low heart moan,

"No, no, Eva; do not leave me. Hold me in your arms, and let me lean my head here; it will not hurt me half so much. Say, Eva, that you will. I will be so still; I will not move, or moan, or cry, or make the least noise." And the lip of the boy quivered, and tears were on that pale face.

"But, dear child, the lady will be so tired. I will hold you in the same position, as carefully as she does." And the secretary bent down to take him from her.

The boy lifted his faint head from her arm.

"Will you be tired of holding me, Eva?" was the broken whisper that stole upon the stillness, as the grieved lip was pressed to silence.

The form of Eva was tremulous with emotion. "No, no, Ally, I will not leave you," was scarcely heard, though all was still as death there.

Her father and uncle John had entered the room. The former stood by her.

"Eva, Eva, you cannot bear this," and he spoke with deep tenderness.

Eva's saddened eyes were lifted to him.

"Yes, yes, dear father, if it will save him one pang." And yet the lip that uttered this was white as chiseled marble.

Henry Sherwood handed her a glass of water. A faint flush, for a moment, passed over her brow as she took it from him, and then it fled leaving it even whiter than before.

The face of the child was hidden upon the arm of Eva. Not once did he cry or groan; only a slight shuddering of the frame told that he still lived, while his arm was examined, replaced and dressed.

Not once had the secretary taken his eyes from Eva. That one dark, mournful gaze seemed fastened there forever. The member of Congress stood apart, with folded arms, gazing upon all. Mr. Ashland sat down by Eva, half supporting her in his arms.

And all was over. A composing draught was administered to the sufferer. It was laid gently upon the sofa; it slept.

And Eva—no cause now existed for exertion. The hour was past—the trial was over—the child slept. She had saved its innocent heart a pang, and yet, for a moment, she looked up pleadingly into her father's face.

Perhaps the secretary understood that look. A glance of significance passed between him and the member of Congress. The latter handed his purse to the surgeon to remunerate him for his services.

What a wild and grateful look Eva bent for a moment on his face. And yet, yet even then, her own paled to the hue of death. Her nerves were ill-fitted for the weight that had been pressed upon them. Her father supported her from the apartment to her chamber; and ere he went back to the parlor, Mrs. Ashland, with a mock mournful countenance, yet with her softest and blindest smile, as if to do away any undue impression that might be made upon the mind of their distinguished visitor, had returned to it.

Victorine, of course, after the very severe shock her nerves had received, was not expected to make her appearance.

The surgeon had gone; the mother of the wounded boy had been sent for, had come. She had been ill. Pale was the gentle face over which time had left no shadowy tracery.

Only by a slight bow did she acknowledge herself in the presence of others; but passed on to where her child still slept. She sank down on her knees by the sofa; she kissed the pale, cold brow of her only one, and tears fell fast upon that young face. Her emotion she was unable to control, and, rising, turned to Mrs. Ashland

and said, with deep earnestness, that told the heart's gratitude,

"I know all—God bless you, madam, for this your kindness to my poor child, in suffering it to remain here. And yet had it not been for her, he might have been killed. Eva is an angel. Oh, how much do I not owe her? She has been so kind to me—she came to me in the hour of sickness and distress and desolation, when no one else did. And then, when I was better, she would have Ally come to her each day to learn to read; and he loves her so. And most proud and happy must you be, dear madam, to possess such an excellent child. Eva is an angel, God bless her—God bless you all."

Mr. Ashland replied, and thus saved his wife the trouble of trying to study an answer.

And the great man had heard all this. That was the only time she ever wished him away from her house; but, all should yet come right. And dark and bitter thoughts sprang up in that mother's untruthful soul.

That night found the Ashlands at a brilliant party in honor of the distinguished Southern Senator. Victorine, as usual, was elegantly, magnificently attired. Mr. Sherwood met them on their entrance, and politely inquired after the health of the fair Victorine. He feared she might suffer from the exciting occurrences of the day.

"And she has, severely," answered the mother. "She ought not to have been here to-night," and she gazed fondly on the languid beauty by her side, and added, with winning interest, "Victorine is so very sensitive—she always has so much sympathy for the suffering."

One significant look passed between the senator and the secretary.

"And how is Miss Eva? Was not her self-imposed task all too trying for her strength?" was the low inquiry of the latter.

Mrs. Ashland answered, in her soft, pensive voice,

"Oh, Eva is so different from Victorine. She is a good girl; but yet, she has so little feeling."

The member of Congress offered his arm to Victorine, for a promenade, which, with a bewitching smile, was accepted.

And the poor secretary turned away. He looked paler than usual, and more dispirited; and the dark eyes were still more sad and beautiful. He turned away—none noticed him. Like a wandering spirit he lingered a few moments in the room and disappeared. None missed him, no one cared for him—he knew it. Was it that which thus saddened his heart? Slowly he passed along the street, and involuntarily he sought the mansion of Mr. Ashland. A servant opened for

him the street door, and then, dispensing with his services, he passed alone into the parlor. The sweet, thrilling sounds of music attracted him there, and prevented the slight noise he made on entering from being heard.

Eva stood by the piano, and, with a wild, sweet and native grace, with unaffected ease, with a perfect naturalness and unembarrassed earnestness, she was singing and playing some simple songs for uncle John, who, half reclining on a sofa, held a newspaper in his hand, yet his thoughts and gaze were elsewhere.

He saw the shadow that fell upon the carpet, and, noiselessly, half rose from his position. The finger of the intruder was lifted to his lip, as he sought a seat among the gathering shadows there, charmed and enchanted by the low, yet beautiful minstrelsy, that stole so sweetly, so thrillingly, so like the breathings of an angel one, through that proud apartment.

"Eva," uncle John spoke, as the young girl turned from the instrument, "Eva, I know you are very tired, but will you play me one piece more?" and taking up a music sheet he placed it before her.

It was a difficult Italian composition, brilliant and elaborate.

"Certainly," was the half surprised reply, "if you wish me to. But no, you are only jesting; you do not like those stately yet complicated compositions."

"No, Eva, I do not dislike them when sung and played by yourself; then all seems so sacred and holy."

The commencement of the air was the answer. How grand, sublime and beautiful. How thrilled the charm-like, changeful strains through the listening soul, till they awoke a wild and startling echo there, as if called forth by angel voices, as if those beautiful breathings were not of earth.

Henry Sherwood moved not. But, mingled with every pulse beat of that proud heart, was that strange, sweet, subduing minstrelsy. Scarcely had the low, spirit cadence died away ere she commenced and played it again, and with an impassioned power and pathos that seemed the very breathings of beauty and grandeur.

She turned from the instrument, and stood by the side of uncle John; and with a slight smile on her pale lips said, as she half unconsciously pushed back the white locks from his brow,

"Now, uncle, don't ask me to play that again for a fortnight."

"No, Eva, I will never ask you to play it again; and I thank you for complying with my request now—a request that must seem to you so

new and strange, and exacting; but it was for another the favor was now solicited, who I hope will be grateful for the sweet and ready compliance."

Eva looked inquiringly into the old man's face. A proud, majestic form rose up from among the evening shadows.

Eva started—white as death was lip and brow, and yet she knew who stood there before her, gazing admiringly upon her.

With a gentle reproach she looked into the face of uncle John, and then her glance for a moment rested on the secretary. A slight flush flitted over the pale forehead; and the tears she could not stay darkened the sad eyes.

"Miss Ashland"—Mr. Sherwood spoke and advanced.

But Eva had fled—she who shrank not from sorrow and suffering could not bear that one gentle and truthful look of tenderness.

The next morning found the senator and the secretary at the Ashland's. The former had called to inquire after the health of Victorine.

And where was Eva? The secretary had inquired for her.

"It is her hour for learning the children's lessons, I believe," was uncle John's dry reply, ere the mother had time to speak.

It was provoking; yet uncle John always would be there when they had company, and always would say just what he pleased. Mrs. Ashland, and daughter, wished him where he would never return. But to no purpose. He was ever omnipresent.

The time had nearly arrived for Mr. Sherwood's departure; and the false Victorine Ashland redoubled her arts to yet win, if possible, that distinguished gentleman's heart. Sometimes she thought her task already accomplished when he would seek her society in preference to all others. And then, when he seemed wholly neglectful of her, forgetting that such a being was in existence, she doubted then her power over him. She knew her charms had failed of their effect. And yet one more effort must be tried. And mother and daughter planned it. They would give a splendid party, cost what it would; and all of the *élite* should be invited. Every possible pains was taken to keep the knowledge of it from uncle John. They feared his just reproofs. Mr. Ashland was from home, or it might not have taken place.

Victorine's outfit for the occasion was beautiful and costly. Her own peculiar charms would be enhanced by it. She certainly could not fail now of making a decided impression.

And where was Eva? The night had arrived.

"Eva, you must assist at your sister's toilet, and then array yourself to be present too this evening." And Mrs. Ashland spoke like one who felt confident of some coveted triumph.

Eva looked up into her face half wildly.

"Why, mother, Willie is so sick; you—they will not think of coming here to-night."

"Nonsense, child; none knows of his illness; and he is better now—almost well. I was in the nursery this morning, and he was much better; there was some color in his face, and his eyes, that have looked so dull and expressionless, are bright with the light of returning health."

After a moment's thought, Eva answered,

"And will not the noise and confusion disturb him, mother?"

"No, Eva," and Mrs. Ashland spoke half impatiently, "his room is so far distant, he will not mind it in the least. He will sleep, I presume, the whole night. But go now to your sister's chamber; she will be expecting, be waiting for you."

With a heavy heart the young girl obeyed. What meant that one dark shadow there, that lay so heavy on her life, that seemed so cold, so fearful?

"Eva, Eva, I thought you would never come," were the words of welcome that met her as she entered. "I have been waiting for you a whole hour."

Crushed tear-drops stood in the sweet eyes of Eva.

"I had been with Willie, and had not thought it was so late till mother called me, just now."

"I wish that Willie was somewhere else—you always have something to do with Willie when I want you." The words were coldly, bitterly, impatiently spoken.

"Oh, Victorine."

Eva could say no more. Her voice was stilled by her feelings. A whole hour she spent in her sister's chamber, and scarcely spoke in answer to the wilful and selfish girl's ill-natured remarks and thoughtless exactions, that seemed so heartless. She fastened the satin robe around her—she placed the flowers in her hair—she wound the golden chain about her neck—she clasped the dazzling diamonds upon her arms. And beautiful, bewildering looked the being upon which Eva now gazed, not with envy, not in awe, but in pity.

Her task was accomplished; and Eva sought her own chamber. She did not ask herself what she should wear, but sank down upon the floor and prayed to God. And yet that one dead, cold, weight left not her heart. In a few moments more she had arrayed herself in a simple dress

of white muslin, with no ornaments save the long tresses that half concealed the beautiful symmetry of her slight form.

She knew the guests had arrived. Could she go down? Could she meet them? The thought of the secretary flashed along her mind. The hue of life trembled on her cold cheek, and its wild light thrilled through her heart.

A low sigh startled her; and yet she knew from whence it came. She pushed back the curtains of her bed. Harry had slept in her apartment since the illness of little Willie. The child was asleep—she bent down and kissed the innocent brow; it did not disturb him, but he moved and moaned and murmured the name of "Willie."

Eva's heart felt the words heavily upon it. With a trembling hand she drew the curtains around the bed, and went, not below, to join in the joyous revelry, but to the apartment of that smitten one.

"Mother," a faint voice said, as she entered. The nurse was gone, Willie was alone; she had left her charge to assist the servants below.

"Willie," and Eva stood close by the bed and bent over him.

"Oh, Eva, I am so glad you have come—I thought it was mother—it is so dark I can hardly see."

"Dark!" and a cold shudder crept through the veins of Eva. A large lamp stood upon the table; the room was very light.

"Yes, so dark and cold, and I have been alone so long."

And yet to Eva the room seemed very warm. She put back the damp hair from his brow—it was white and cold. Slowly he lifted up his pale hand and passed it over her face.

"Can you not see me now, Willie?" and she held the cold hand within her own, and counted the low, slow pulses of the faded wrist.

"Yes, now; I can see you now, Eva. But it has been so dark and cold." And with a wild, imploring earnestness he watched her looks. What a strange beauty was in those sweet, uplifted eyes. Eva almost shrank back from the unworldly gaze.

"And you will not leave me, Eva?" And the voice was very low and faltering. "I am so tired and sick."

"No, Willie, I will not leave you." And she bent her face close to his that he might hear the words she could scarcely speak. With an effort he wound his arms around her neck.

"Take me up Eva, it is so cold here."

The sister lifted him in her arms. And he bent his face to her till it was half concealed by

the folds of fine white muslin that shrouded the trembling form. And Eva felt that the heart that lay so close to her was beating slower and slower. She folded him still more closely to her.

"Mother," the child looked up, and then his head lay still more heavy on her arm.

"Do you wish to see her, Willie? Shall I call mother here?" was the low whisper.

"No, no, not now." And then he lay long as if asleep.

"Mother, mother," he started from a restless dream.

And where was the mother? And where was Eva?

There, the angel of the midnight hour, holding in her arms the helpless form of a dying brother.

"Mother, mother." Again the mournful words trembled over the cold lips of the boy.

"Shall I not call mother, dear Willie?" And with a fearful pang at her heart, Eva gazed down into those dying yet wildly beautiful eyes.

"No, no, Eva; do not leave me. Is it midnight, Eva?" The words were broken, but the glance was one of pleading earnestness.

"No, not quite yet."

"Then it is not to-morrow, is it Eva? Father was coming home to-morrow. I shall never see him again." And the sad eyes for a moment closed, and the faint head moved upon her arm.

"Oh, yes, Willie, I hope you will many times yet; you will be better when you have slept."

The boy did not reply, but the cold lip quivered, and there was an inward struggling, a suffering that was the bitterness of death. But that passed away, and his breathings came low and more regular. But it was only for a few moments.

"Mother," and again that one moan stole strangely upon the solemn stillness there; and again he seemed to sleep.

"Is it midnight now, Eva?" and the sunken eyes were half unclosed, and the words were scarcely whispered.

"Not yet, Willie. But go to sleep, it will soon be to-morrow now."

"Sing to me, Eva, as you used to. I will soon be asleep."

Eva's whole soul trembled with suffering; and yet with a mighty effort she conquered her emotions, and with touching sweetness, breathed over the loved boy of other days.

Willie lay still and motionless in her arms, and lower still the dying heart throbbed against her own.

"Mother, mother," and all was still. The child slept—but only for a moment.

"Is it to-morrow now, Eva?" and ere she answered, he faintly whispered, "kiss me, Eva."

With a half impassioned movement she bent her lips to his. Oh, how cold and still they were. One weak hand was lifted to her face, and then it fell back again upon the stilled bosom.

"To-morrow will never come." The broken words were only breathed. "Oh, is this death, Eva? I am so cold and tired, and—and when to-morrow comes I will be in heaven. You will come—shall I tell God you will come soon, Eva? Do come soon, Eva. Mother—father"—and the white lips were stilled forever. The child slept; yes, slept, for he still breathed. Oh, the agony of Eva! She counted every respiration with fearful anguish—she had counted the last. The child slept forever.

The midnight hour struck—the to-morrow had come. Yet still Eva held the dead child in her arms, so closely that he was half concealed by the folds of white muslin that seemed the holy shroud of the dead. The hours that went on seemed an age to the suffering heart of Eva. The door of the apartment was opened, and a servant spoke her name. Eva did not answer, but held the dead child still closer to her.

"Your mother has sent for you, Miss Eva." And the girl's cold tones seemed like the breathings of blight in some sacred sanctuary. "And you must go down now; she wants you to accompany Miss Victorine in that song she sings so much." A shudder shook the smitten soul of the listener; and more than agony were in the wild words.

"No, no, Lucy; I—I cannot go."

"But you must; your mother says you must. They are waiting for you, and they have looked everywhere for you."

There was one piece of music in which Victorine excelled. For the whole evening she had failed to detain the senator by her side for more than a few minutes at a time. Her charms, she feared, had failed of their effect, and this one last effort must be tried. The voice that sang must steal to his soul with a subduing power.

Eva looked up bewilderingly, and involuntarily she lifted her hands to her aching brow. A sudden, painful darkness struck upon her brain, and stilled to silence the wild throbbings of the tried heart.

"Leave me, Lucy; I will go." The words sounded strange and hollow; the girl withdrew.

Eva laid the dead boy upon the couch, and, with her hands closely clasped together, and with a faltering step, descended to the parlor. What a blaze of light and beauty struck her sight! What an enchanting being met the gaze of the

beholders! Her dress of simple white, not a fold was displaced, and the long tresses, so damp and dark, swept down over the white shoulders, half concealing their faultless symmetry, half shading the marble paleness of that sweet face—yes, lip and brow were even whiter, if possible, than the transparent garb of light she wore. For a moment the large, wild eyes were lifted; what a world of dreamy loveliness, of mournful beauty, of wild sadness was there.

The rooms were stilled as if by some magic hand—the voices of the guests were hushed; they were gazing wonderingly on that ethereal, angel-like being that glided on past them.

She stood by the piano. For one moment the white hand was pressed upon the brow, as if to still some deep pain there, and then it lay upon the keys, listlessly, as if no strength were there. There was a wild start—Victorine's rich voice broke upon the deepening silence. Tremblingly the wearied fingers passed over the keys, and the sounds they gave forth were low and sweet and mournful. Closer drew the crowd around her; the melancholy measure had stolen with a bewildering power over the listening heart. Lower and lower grew the wild, spirit tones, and were stilled. The strain had changed. A low dirge for the dead was played instead. And the beautiful numbers trembled in all their mournful wildness, in all their sweet sublimity throughout the stately saloons, and thrilled back with a strange and hallowed power to each awakened heart, like some immortal minstrelsy, like the low cry, like the wild moan of an angel, a lone wanderer here on earth.

A shadow fell upon the keys. Eva looked up. The secretary stood there beside her; and what a look was that that met his troubled gaze. The startling eye of the young girl fell; a faint hue rose to the pale temple and fled again—the hand was stilled upon the echoing keys. Involuntarily he laid his hand upon her's—it was cold as ice; she did not withdraw it; she had not the power to do so; she could not breathe, yet she did not faint, but leaned almost wholly against the instrument for support.

"Miss Ashland." It was the deep, low voice of Henry Sherwood that broke startlingly upon the painful, fearful stillness.

"Eva, Eva." The father had returned; he stood close beside her. She looked up wildly into his anxious face; the grieved lip quivered with the broken words that stole slowly over them.

"Father, father, it is to-morrow now."

With a fearful pang at his heart he gazed upon his child. Slowly she passed before him; she

had left the room. He bent his head abstractedly; the secretary placed his arm within his and drew him away. The senator, Victorine, Mrs. Ashland and some others followed.

Mechanically Mr. Ashland led the way to the chamber of Willie. The door was flung open; the room was still, was cold as if it were the home of death. Faintly burned the lamp upon the table, yet its dying rays fell upon Eva; she sat like a still shadow there with Willie in her arms.

"Eva, Eva, my dear child," Mr. Ashland approached and knelt down beside her. One low moan trembled upon the fearful stillness there. She laid the stiffened form of the departed one in his arms.

"Father, it is to-morrow now."

That dreadful darkness had left her brain; she was herself again, now that they knew that Willie was dead.

"Great God!" was all that the father could utter; the deep agony of his soul burst forth in this.

The secretary took the dead boy from his trembling arms and laid him upon the couch.

Mr. Ashland's grief was frantic in the extreme, and Victorine wrung her jeweled hands, and broke forth in lamentations of sorrow, still betraying the most extravagant signs of suffering, after the manner of some immortal heroine, of some immortal romance.

But Eva still sat there, shrouded in her drapery of light; sat there, still, and cold, and motionless—no other token of woe was seen. Yet it seemed as if her heart would break, its suffering was too deep, too terrible for tears.

The secretary stood apart gazing with all of earnestness upon her. He could not speak to her then, in that one hour of woe—he could not then offer words of consolation for grief so sacred, it would have been sacrilege.

CHAPTER IV.

THE day had come for the Honorable Henry Sherwood's departure. There was a formal farewell morning call for the Ashlands. Victorine now knew that he was lost to her. But the secretary had passed on to Mr. Ashland's office, and remained until within an hour of his departure from the city.

"What could he want of you so long?" was Mrs. Ashland's inquiry the first moment she was alone with her husband.

"He called to ask me for the hand of Eva," was half sadly returned.

"Impossible." Why, Eva is but a child, and

how could he think of such a thing. He is poor and dependant on his rich relative for support."

A deep flush rose to the brow of Mr. Ashland. "We could not spare Eva yet," Mrs. Ashland resumed, "for many, many years; and I suppose you gave him his answer directly."

"And I did not, readily; for I was uncertain of Eva's sentiments respecting him, and——"

"You did not give him any encouragement, I hope." Mrs. Ashland looked up anxiously and wildly.

"In a few weeks Eva will be his—I have promised him this," was the low reply.

"Good heavens, Mr. Ashland, why was I not consulted?"

"His business was simply with me."

"And you have promised him Eva?"

"I have. I believe him to be worthy of her; no higher compliment could I pay him than that," was half proudly said.

"And yet I cannot spare Eva—she is so useful. How could you think of such a thing?" was the reproachful answer.

"And why not? Victorine can take her place, and now engage in those duties that the younger sister only should have assisted her in performing."

"Mr. Ashland, I am astonished. Victorine is so delicate, you know; she would not live a week to do what Eva does. You have been hearing uncle John talk—he is so afraid that Victorine will take a minute's comfort he is ready to die," was the angry rejoinder.

"He need not fear that now, even if it were as you say," was the calm, almost severe reply. "It is too late now. A character that has been trained like her's can never know of a pure and rational enjoyment." And, without waiting to hear more, he left the apartment.

And those few weeks had passed on. The bridal day had come and gone. The wedding was quiet and simple. Eva had left her own home roof forever. And a smile of hope was on the pale lip of the secretary, a faint flush upon his brow, a holier, a more beautiful light in his dark eye as he bore her away.

Tears were in the eyes of Mr. Ashland as he bade his daughter farewell; and he sought his own apartment and remained long alone. Were his thoughts with the gentle dove he had given to another? Did he fear for its future? Nay, not that. And yet his gaze *was* upon the future, with him to whom his treasure was entrusted, was given.

The morning papers were brought in and laid upon the table. The family were at breakfast. It was the morning after the wedding. Victorine

took up the damp sheet, and half sneeringly said,

"Oh, I must see if Eva's marriage notice is here."

Mr. Ashland gazed upon his daughter's face, yet leisurely continued his breakfast, without speaking.

Victorine turned to the inside page of the paper. A bitter laugh rang strangely through the room.

"Only think—what a blunder. Who could have made it? It is put down here 'the Honorable Henry Sherwood to Eva F., the second daughter of James Ashland, Esq.,' and so on. Really, Eva would feel quite proud if she saw this."

"Eva's mind is too well balanced to feel a weak and vain pride let her situation or station be what it may." And Mr. Ashland spoke with stern earnestness.

Victorine continued her remarks. Mrs. Ashland wondered who could have made such a mistake; and Mr. Ashland still continued his breakfast. It seemed as if he never ate so long before.

Victorine showed him the marriage notice. He took the paper deliberately and slowly read it over aloud, word by word, as if to detect wherein the error complained of existed.

"It is right, all right, I believe." And he turned carelessly to another part of the paper.

"Why, father, it is the *Honorable* Henry Sherwood. Did you not see?"

Mr. Ashland was busily reading some political intelligence. When he had concluded he said,

"I know it, my child; I know it. It is all right. Eva is the bride of the Honorable Henry Sherwood; while you, Victorine, and all the rest of the fashionable ladies in town, have been all along flirting with the poor secretary, and trying to make a conquest of his heart, which, it seems, is still his own, despite of all the besieging ordeals it has gone through with."

Victorine sank back half fainting in her chair.

Mrs. Ashland said quickly, bitterly,

"And you knew this all the time."

"No, I did not know it until the day I had promised him the hand of Eva. Then, and not till then, he told me all."

"And did Eva know it?"

"She did not; not when she left her home. It was as the bride of the poor, dependant and neglected secretary."

"But, did not uncle John know it all the time?"

"He did. He has been long acquainted with the senator from A——. He is very dear, very near to him. His mother is the sister of one who was more than life to him."

"And this is all uncle John's work," was said with a bitter emphasis.

"No, my wife, you are mistaken; uncle John knew nothing of it. He had no hand in this, only in directing the mind, in forming the character of our own sweet Eva. And now that treasure I have given to one who I know will ever love, will ever cherish the trust as something holy."

If her idol daughter was not the wife of the member of Congress, the other was. Mrs. Ashland endeavored to be reconciled to the idea.

Mr. Ashland said, severely, bitterly, as if the very thought wrung his heart as with death,

"You could not for a moment suppose that the gentleman in question would ever seek the hand and heart of Victorine, of one so helpless and useless, so selfish and romantic. No man of *sense* would do that, would wish for such a wife. And I should forever despise that one who would condescend to bend so low as to marry Victorine Ashland in her present imbecile state. I could not help it. God only, now, can work out that change in her character, in her life, which must be ere she will ever be happy or useful."

JOHN PITMAN AND THE WOLVES.

A WINTER EVENING'S TALE.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

THE following plain narrative has its foundation in fact. It is one of those deeply impressive tales of pioneer life, the recollection of which is warmly associated with the joys that in my childhood cheered the long winter evening, and endeared the fireside of home. The scenes and incidents of the story are, at this moment, as vividly pictured upon my imagination as if it were no more than a week ago that I was a wonder-loving child, sitting in the chimney corner and listening with intensest interest to the graphic description of life in the back-woods, which the aged orator of the hearth-circle knew so well how to pourtray.

I don't know that I can do better than give the narrative, as nearly as possible, in the storyteller's own words.

After undergoing the solicitations of the younger members of the family, for sometime, with exemplary patience, the old man scratched his nose, looked thoughtfully at the fire, and finally cleared his throat to speak; unmistakable signs from which we judge that he has been taxing his memory or his invention to frame the elements of some new story.

"Well, boys, if you have got your lessons for to-morrow——"

"Oh, we've got our lessons by heart!" interrupted a chorus of voices.

"And you, Margaret?" asked the old man, patting the head of a fair-haired girl, who had drawn her little chair to his side, in order not to lose a word of the expected story.

Margaret's intelligent eyes and truthful brow assure him that she has not neglected her task.

"Then keep still," says the old man, knocking the ashes out of his pipe on the andiron, "and I will tell you about John Pitman and the wolves——"

"I beg of you not to tell that horrible story!" exclaimed the mother of the children. "It will frighten them so that they will not get over it in a week."

"It won't frighten me," lisps little Margaret. "I like wolf-stories."

"Ha! ha! You are a brave girl! Well, I shall have to tell you the story, for I can't think of any other."

"You remember hearing me tell about old Captain Eddy, who was shot by the Indian in Clapp's Hollow, and ran all the way to Beaver Brook, with a bullet in his shoulder?"

"And had the bullet taken out, and kept in a snuff box, for his children to look at," chimes in little Margaret. "Oh, I remember that!"

"Don't talk!" exclaims Julius, the oldest of the children, in a tone of authority. "Let grandfather tell his story."

"As I was going to say, Captain Eddy's oldest daughter married John Pitman, and went to live with him on the very outskirts of the settlement. The red skins had all been driven away then, and the settlers were no longer in continual fear of being shot down and scalped the minute they put their heads out of their houses. So John, who was a bold fellow, six feet high, and weighed a hundred and eighty—without an ounce of spare flesh either, for he was all bone and sinew—John, I say, put him up a log house two good miles from Beaver Brook, and began to mow down the trees, and burn log heaps and stumps, and break up the new land, like a perfect Napoleon of the woods.

"John and Sophronia were a happy couple, I assure you. Industrious as bees, both of them; and I never heard of their having a dispute. John used to work hard all day, and Sophronia was sure to have a glorious supper ready for him by the time he came in at night.

"One cold morning in the winter time—and now I am coming to the story—John went up the river to a grand log-rolling; and Sophronia did not expect him back until night. She was all alone that day; and she busied herself repairing her husband's clothes, and making his home comfortable, as every good wife should do. John had told her that he would return in season for supper, and so, anticipating great pleasure when he should come home cold and hungry and find the great fire blazing and the table smoking with good things, she went about her preparations with the happiest heart in the world.

"In those little clearings, surrounded with the great trees of the forest, evening comes on a good deal earlier than it does here, where the woods are all cut away. In the shadows of old oaks,

chestnuts and maples, standing like a vast army between John's cottage and sun-down, it began to grow dark in the middle of the afternoon. There was not much snow on the ground at that time; but it was mid-winter, and the woods around must have looked wretched, dreary and gloomy to Sophronia, all alone in the new log house. After John left her in the morning, she never saw a human being during the day; nor any living thing in fact, except the pig and cat, and a deer or two that wandered by the door.

"But as I said, Sophronia was cheerful and happy, expecting her husband; and as soon as it was quite dark, she had a rousing fire warming the log house, and half a dozen great potatoes roasting in the ashes for John's supper. Then she raked out a full half bushel of glowing red coals upon the hearth, and set the spider on over them, loaded with several slices of steak—venison steak—for John had killed a nice fat doe only the day before.

"Well, the potatoes were cooked beautifully, and the venison broiled to a charm; and Sophronia was thinking how nice it would be if John should pop into the house just at that moment, when she heard the howl of a wolf away off in the woods.

"Sophronia listened; her heart almost stopped beating. She knew that John was armed with his rifle and his axe, and that he was bold and strong, and that he was no more afraid of a wolf than of a dog; but she could not help shuddering as she thought of his being pursued and attacked by a whole pack, enraged and emboldened by hunger.

"The howl was repeated, and echoed and echoed again in the depth of the forest. The hideous sounds came from the direction of the logging; and Sophronia fancied she heard a shout."

"Was it her husband that shouted?" eagerly asks little Margaret, with her anxious face upturned toward the narrator.

The old man smiles indulgently, and patting her head, continued his story.

"Sophronia thought it was John's voice, but as all was silent for the next minute or two, she thought she might be mistaken. So she placed the broiled venison between two plates, by the fire, where it would keep warm, and waited anxiously for a repetition of the shout.

"Whilst she listened, another howl—and another—then half a dozen in full chorus—came through the woods in the same direction. You may imagine how the young wife felt when she thought of her husband."

"Oh, dear!" said Margaret, with tears; "but couldn't he kill them with his axe?"

"Don't interrupt me, child. Think of poor Sophronia, all alone in that wilderness with wolves all around her, and her husband away! But she feared only for him. Anxiety for his safety would not let her rest; so throwing only a thick shawl over her head and shoulders, she opened the door, and went out. The moon was up, and she could see distinctly to the end of the clearing. But nothing lived or moved there. All was silent. Then suddenly on the dry top of a gloomy tree, not a dozen rods from the spot where Sophronia stood, a dismal owl hallooed, *hoo-hoo! hoo-hoo!* filling the woods with echoes, and the poor woman's heart with forebodings and fear. But Sophronia thought it was the owl she had heard before, instead of John's voice; and she was beginning to hope that he was out of danger from the wolves, when there came another shout, and she knew his voice."

"Was he far off?" inquired Margaret, in painful suspense.

"Not much more than a quarter of a mile. In fact Sophronia saw him a minute after—or at least saw some tall figure—emerge from the woods, at the end of the clearing, and move rapidly across the white ground. Then it disappeared near a young chesnut tree, which had been left standing in the field; and instantly after, one, two, three, half a dozen dark objects glided over the sward."

"Were they wolves?"

"You would have thought so, child, if you had heard them howl, and Sophronia did, a minute after. She was distracted with terror. She could not see John, and it seemed to her that the wolves were tearing him; that they were fighting over their prey.

"But when she had given him up, and as she staggered against the corner of the house, faint and dizzy, in despair, the woods rang with a sound which gave new life to her heart, and made her fairly leap for joy."

"What sound?" asks the golden-haired girl, her countenance brightening with hope.

"The report of John's rifle. *Crack-bang!* and there was an instantaneous glow of flame shooting downward, from the lower boughs of the young chesnut tree in the field.

"Ho, John!" cried Sophronia, louder than she ever shouted before in her life.

"John is a hard name to call by itself, on account of its shortness; and Sophronia always put in the ho! The husband shouted back and said something, which she could not understand for the howling of the wolves; but as soon as these were silent for a minute, he shouted again, and she could make out, from what she heard,

that he had killed two wolves with his axe, in the woods, and shot one under the tree; and declaring himself out of peril, he enjoined her not to endanger her health and life by remaining out of doors that bitter night, with ravenous wolves all about her.

"For the first time Sophronia perceived that the air was mortal cold; it seemed full of points of needles. She hurried into the house, and sunk half dead upon a chair. She was almost frozen.

"Sounds from without aroused her. The woods seemed alive with wolves; and in the midst of the yells, the report of John's rifle came to her ears."

"Was he in the tree?" asked Margaret.

"To be sure!" answers Julius, impatiently.

"Don't interrupt!"

"Sophronia knew that her husband was in the chestnut branches, above the reach of the wolves; but still she had her fears. A branch might break—John's foot might slip, and the hungry pack seize him with their jaws before he reached the ground; or, even should he escape them—and John was too cautious and self-possessed to be caught falling from a tree—he might be unable to shoot one half of them, and be kept in the tree all night; all the cold, cold night!"

Margaret shivers.

"As long as Sophronia could hear the reports of his rifle, it seemed that he was near her, and alive; but when a long interval elapsed, and there was no more firing, she started in fear, and making out of the house shouted, 'Ho, John!' as I described before."

"Did he answer?"

"Yes, child; and he told his wife that he had used up all his bullets, and that there were dozens of wolves around him! As for that matter Sophronia could see that the ground was covered with them; dark objects moving about on the white surface of the ground, fighting, growling and jumping up against the tree in their rage of famine. Occasionally one of the gaunt monsters would set up a loud, dismal cry, which would be answered in different directions, far off in the woods.

"Do go into the house," shouted John, 'I am safe; and you can do nothing for me. You will catch your death-cold in this biting air. Besides, wolves are prowling all around you. They will be upon you before you think of it. I may have to stop here till morning; but don't let it disturb you. Go to bed and sleep if you can.'

"Whilst he was shouting, a gaunt wolf came leaping toward Sophronia, followed by others of the pack. Terrified, she fled into the house,

just in time to shut the door and fasten him out; but he came up with an angry snap and growl, which made her blood curdle in her veins.

"She did not venture to open the door again; and as there were no windows in the side of the house toward the tree in which her husband had taken refuge, she could not keep up with him any communication. So the best she could do was to sit down and wait patiently as she could for the morning. All this time the fire was burning away, the brands falling upon the hearth, and the potatoes turning to dry, black coals in the ashes.

"Well, after a great while—and it was the longest night Sophronia ever knew—the first streaks of dawn stole into the house, and found the poor woman asleep in her chair. It was the first slumber she had enjoyed; and when, after her watching and anxiety, she awoke from that late sleep, the night was gone—daylight streamed through the windows, and all was still around her.

"It took Sophronia a minute to collect her faculties, and realize the terrors of the night; then remembering her husband, she flew to the door to see if the wolves were dispersing. Not one was to be seen; the field was clear; and the silence frightened her."

"Why was she frightened? I should have thought she would be glad to find the wolves had gone off."

"She was frightened, child, because, although nothing now hindered John's coming to the house, he had not appeared. The awful thought, that he had fallen, and been eaten by the monsters, appalled her. But looking closely, she soon discovered some object in the chestnut tree, which she hoped was her husband. She called to him, and as he made no answer, she thought he must be asleep.

"As she ran to awaken him, she saw two young men coming through the woods, from the direction of Beaver Brook. They passed directly under the tree, without looking up; too much absorbed, probably, by the sight which met their eyes on the ground; John's axe, dropped in climbing the tree, blood, the ten carcasses of wolves, and the snow all trampled and trodden around.

"'Awful cold morning!' cried one of the young men, seeing Sophronia approaching from the house. 'Guess you've been having a time here, by the looks. Heard a tremendous howling over this way, last night, and thought we'd come over and see if anything was the matter. Where's John?'

"Sophronia, speechless with anxiety and fear, pointed to the boughs of the chestnut.

“‘I’m blessed!’ exclaimed the first speaker, ‘if there aint John in the tree. Hello!’

“‘His body is twisted over that limb queer enough,’ said the other settler. ‘I—I declare, Charley—I believe——’

“‘You’d better climb the tree,’ interrupted his companion.

“The young man went up like a squirrel. But before he reached the branches, Sophronia had fallen lifeless upon the ground. She had seen a ghastly face—not like her John’s face—looking down with staring eyes from the tree.

“‘Is he asleep?’ cried Charles, as soon as he saw his companion touch the body.

“‘If he is, he never will wake again!’ muttered the other. ‘He is stiff and cold as a cake of ice!’”

“Was he dead?” inquired little Margaret, who cannot realize it.

“Yes, child; John Pitman had frozen to death in the tree; and Sophronia, poor child, was taken home to her father’s, and died the next fall, broken-hearted, it was said. And this is the end of my story.”

HOW LUCY MALDEN CAME BACK TO BEECHY.

BY MARTHA RUSSELL.

CHAPTER I.

THE wind had quite forgotten itself—"broke loose," or it never would have whistled and roared, blustered and careered through the quiet streets of Beechy, as it did one December evening in 184—. We can understand how it may delight in a trial of strength with the mighty forests or the grey old ocean, piling its waves in mountains, and scattering the fleets of nations like dead leaves, or even, when it has nothing better on hand, to sweep with a whoop, through the open windows of the village smithy, to give the great black bellows a whiff and send an extra shower of sparks up into the night, or go roaming up and down wide old chimneys, like those of the parsonage at Beechy, hunting after the lingering odors of long gone dinners; but why it should flap the minister's cloak cape over his eyes on his own door-step and slam his door in his face, is more than we can guess, to say nothing of such tricks as whirling away old widow Brown's milk-strainer, and hunting whole flocks of withered leaves like brown birds hither and thither, until they were glad to hide in every nook and cranny that promised them the least show of protection. It was small business, to say the least, and well deserved Parson Adams' epithet of "*rude*," as he laid aside his wrappings, and in dressing-gown and slippers, sat down by a cheerful fire, to look over his letters and papers, for it had been "mail day" in our village, and the good man had been to the post office.

He is accustomed to read these in the sitting-room, by the side of his wife, that he may select for her such scraps of news or information as may be particularly interesting—thus doubling his pleasures by dividing them—an art in which Mr. Adams is no mean proficient.

As he sat there, with his spotted silk handkerchief spread across his knees, and his thin, large-veined hands open to the fire, it might be seen that he had no beauty to boast of in a physical sense—a small, thin, pale man, with an immaculate neatness of dress—a good shaped head and a world of benevolence and quiet thoughtfulness in his face and manner. There were wrinkles on his brow and a few grey hairs

upon his temples. But his wife's hair, age, and eyes, too, were brown as a robin's back—indeed, she was robin-like in many other things, active, cheerful, busy, hopeful—reverent of her husband's slightest word, loving him better than ought on earth save—the baby in the cradle.

She was a minister's daughter—early trained to reverence "the cloth" and, as her husband was several years her senior, perhaps, this was the reason why she lavished more of her gushing affections on his child rather than upon him. She was darning stockings, (don't frown, dear lady, for darning is a part of a country minister's wife's discipline,) and rocking the cradle with one foot, an art in which she had grown to be quite an adept, seeing "little Frederic" had only come with the roses and other pleasant things, in June.

The contents of the minister's letters were much after the pattern of ministerial correspondence. Brother A— was without a charge, and wished Mr. Adams' influence and good offices in securing for him the vacant pulpit in a neighboring society; brother B— was to be installed over the church and society of D— the ensuing Thursday; and brother E—, of M—, proposed an exchange for the next Sabbath.

With the last note in hand, the minister and his wife discussed the various points to which they related—Mr. A—'s adaptation to the vacant church in question—the installation, and the proposed exchange, these two last, bringing up several personal topics relating to the "ways and means" of domestic economy—for if they attended the ceremony at D—, Mr. Adams must certainly have a new vest, and Mrs. Adams' wedding dress would at least, want turning and making up, beside the bonnet needed a new trimming sadly.

"I cannot imagine who this letter can be from. It is post-marked B—, and I have no acquaintances there," said the minister, at length, taking up the only unopened letter, and adjusting his glasses, (the good man was short-sighted) he scrutinized the letters of the address as we are wont to do those of an unknown hand. "I don't recognize the hand at all."

"Perhaps you had better open it and see," suggested his wife, as, with a glance at the clock,

and a request that he would "just jog the cradle if baby stirred," she went out to the kitchen to look after their evening meal.

When she returned her husband was walking the room with an unusual air of perturbation, and a face so sad that, although by no means a curious woman, she was struck by the change and asked hastily if he had heard bad news.

"Not bad in one sense, Sarah, for it is evidently the leading of the hand of God, but sad, very, very sad. Read that," he added, placing the letter in her hand.

The paper was coarse and crumpled—stained as if by tears—the ink poor and pale, the handwriting entirely different from the address, light and almost illegible, yet the words, once deciphered, were not easily forgotten.

It was addressed to the Rev. John Adams, and ran thus:—

"I am dying, sir—even before you receive this I may be beyond the judgment of man, and *'it is well.'* I have no wish to live—not even for my child's sake, for what could I be to her but a shame and a reproach, and I know that His future, whatever it may be, can hold for me no suffering which I do not deserve—none of which I have not had a foretaste on earth.

"I do not say this with a hardened, reckless heart, for old memories are busy there—memories of blessings scorned; but, while I have strength, let me say *this*, amid the degradation and crime, the guilt and shame, the utter despair which leads one to *'curse God and die,'* I have kept my faith in you; and, now, when the grave opens before me, I beg of you protection for my child—my Anne. Take her—let her be your servant, and teach her as you would once have taught her mother, the beauty of a true, a Christian life; take her away from this curse-laden atmosphere—alas! that I should have breathed no other!—and may God forever bless you! The grave takes the sting from disgrace, as it does infection from disease—perhaps, when my brother knows that the clouds cover me, he will relent and be kind to my poor child for his own sake, if not for mine. LUCY ELDON."

"Lucy Eldon!" repeated the gentlewoman, with tearful eyes, "who is she, poor thing?"

"She was once Lucy Malden—only sister of George Malden, of the Quarter."

"Colonel Malden's sister? I never heard that he had one."

"I supposed that some of our good parishoners had told you her sad story before now," returned the husband, mournfully.

"But *what* is she?" asked Mrs. Adams, with a troubled glance at his face.

"She tells you herself," he said, pointing to the note, "a poor, ruined outcast—lost, lost," he added, folding his arms and walking the room in great agitation; "and yet—what am I to judge? He, who alone knoweth the strength of the temptation, alone can judge of the guilt."

Mrs. Adams watched him a few moments, in surprise, not unmingled with alarm, then going up to him, she laid her hand on his arm. Her troubled, uneasy look was gone, and as he gazed down into her quiet, innocent face, his own grew calm, and he said, as he took her hand,

"Perhaps I ought to have told you this before, my wife. But sit down, now, and let me tell you who and what Lucy Eldon is—tell you how dear she was once to—to all her friends—to me—even to your husband, Sarah, and then your woman's heart shall dictate an answer to that letter."

The brown head was bent, and the brown eyes lowered a moment, for no woman hears unmoved the confession from her husband's lips, that she is a Leah in his heart—that another has dwelt there before her, but the next instant, they were raised, and with one glance at the cradle, she turned them calmly and trustingly on her husband.

"Thank you for your confidence, my husband; but let me decide now. Bring this poor, little child home, and let her be a daughter to us, and a sister to Frederic."

"It is like you, true, and womanly, Sarah," he said, as he kissed her hand, and led her to a seat.

Then, while the wild wind rose to a tempest without—roaring and shrieking in the old chimnies, rattling the loose window-casings, wailing through the wide, old chambers, and moaning and sobbing, like a living thing, among the branches of the ancient willow in front of the house, the minister told the sad story of Lucy Malden. How she had been born to her parents when they were "well stricken in years," and their only child, the present Colonel Malden, was a young man of eighteen; how just as she was budding into girlhood, a kind of petted girl—Joseph, both her parents died and left her to the care of her brother, whose strongest characteristic, even in his youth, was an intense family pride. "At thirty," went on the good man, "he was just what he is now, honorable, upright and truthful, but cold in his manners, arbitrary and exacting and rigidly severe in his judgment of himself as well as others. He never *went out of himself*, and therefore knew little of the mind or heart of his young sister—the world of thoughts and emotions teeming there. He remained a

bachelor, but sold the old place near us, where his parents had spent their days, and removed to the more valuable farm at the 'Quarter,' where a maiden aunt had charge of his household, like to himself in everything, save that her pride was, if anything, more intense, and her judgment of such as happened to differ from her, still more severe.

"It was a lonely place for the young girl, and she often escaped and spent whole weeks here with my mother, who had been her mother's dearest friend: besides there was no objection made to her visiting at the minister's. I was her senior by eight years—an awkward, shy boy—a perfect contrast to her, yet we were very fond of each other, and the notion became gradually received in both families that we were, some day, to be man and wife."

The minister paused, and seemed lost in painful thought until the gentle touch of his wife's hand aroused him.

"With me," he resumed, "this thought became a fixed idea. I pondered it in my heart, until every thought and hope and feeling took from it its hue, and my solitary student life was transfigured by its light. It was a boy's dream, dear wife—such as most boys have, I suppose. To her, it was probably never aught but a jest—for she frequently spoke of it in a gay, jesting tone: but as the years went on, she dropped this, and I—I grew more and more silent, for I dared not break through the sweet barrier of dignity and reserve with which womanhood surrounded her as with a veil. She was gentle and kind to me—that was all—thus I left her for my last term at the institute at A—."

"When I returned," and the good man's voice was tremulous as he spoke, "she was gone—disowned by her family—her very name a by-word and reproach. Soon after I left, a Mr. Eldon had appeared in the village—a merchant, it was said, from New York—merely a merchant's clerk, as it afterward appeared. Professing himself much pleased with the beauty of the place, he lingered here some weeks, ostensibly hunting and fishing, but in reality pursuing Lucy Malden, whom he had marked for his prey. She, poor girl, was but too willing to listen—what wonder? he was handsome, winning and apparently devoted to her, and—oh! it was the old story—old as sin and death. Her brother, who with my parents and a few others, had read Eldon truly from the first and forbidden their meeting, when he found the world busy with her name, disowned her—turned her from his door, and deeming all her father's old friends the enemies of her idol, to whom should she fly but to him who

had so often promised to be all the world to her?

"Had Eldon been human—had he been a man, the love and unbounded trust of that innocent child must have redeemed him—but when weary of her, he could taunt her with the ease with which he won her, and—she could bear it, as is woman's way—bear it patiently, hoping to win back his love, until he coolly made her over to another like himself—then in her madness and despair she became reckless, and fell from one miserable depth to another, until—oh!" he said, with a shudder, "it is dreadful, horrible to think of her, as the little, innocent child that once sat where you do, Sarah, and with her head on my mother's lap talked of God and heaven!"

Mr. Adams covered his face with his thin hands, while the gentle wife rose, and drawing his head to her bosom said,

"John, dear John," (she seldom allowed herself to call him by his given name,) "let us bring this poor creature home too. God has not forgotten those days; He must have put it into her heart to write that note. Perhaps, if we were to bring her home, poor thing, He would make her once more like a little, sinless child."

The minister shook his head. "Not *that*, dear wife, the traces of sin are too deep; but He can pardon her and give her His peace. But," he added, after a pause, "have you counted all the cost to yourself, Sarah? The care and the trouble—the comments and criticisms, perchance censures of our people, though few save myself know how deeply she has fallen—the anger of Colonel Malden? We must do nothing rashly, dear."

Mrs. Adams looked thoughtful—visions of certain pattern-like, censorious dames, (what community is without them?) came up before her, and then she thought of their small salary, for Mr. Adams, had succeeded his father in the pulpit and the hearts of the people of Beechy, and received only what had been the rule with him, and the weary days since little Frederic's birth, when, with unexpected company in her house, she had gone to her rest, tired out with household cares and labors; but above all these, she heard a voice saying, "In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these little ones, ye have done it unto me," and turning to her husband, she said,

"I have, John. Let them come; the mother and the child."

"And you will give up the installation?" asked the minister, with a quiet smile, as he drew down her head, and smoothed back the soft, brown hair.

"Yes, and then I shall need neither dress nor bonnet, for the old ones will do for home, you know."

Ah, she was a noble woman, that little robin-like wife of his, and doubtless the minister thought so, though she was twenty-eight when he married her.

Before he slept, Mr. Adams had an interview with his "right hand man" or adviser, old Deacon Guthrie. It was too dark to see the old man's face, but he could *hear* the tears in his voice as he said,

"Yes, you are right, sir; we must discriminate between the sin and the sinner. Poor child! she was just the age of our Mary—they were baptized on the same day. We thought it hard, mother and I, when our child died; but who knows, sir, but she was taken away from the evil to come. It is of God's mercy that we are, any of us, what we are."

CHAPTER II.

Was there any regret in the heart of the minister's wife the next morning, as she watched the progress of old "Whitefoot" up the street, bearing her husband on his Samaritan errand? Any tinge of womanly jealousy in her heart, as she recollected the story of this poor girl, and what she had once been to her husband? None; for "we see only what we have learned to see," and the lessons of selfishness and distrust she had never learned.

But she had much to do that day; so tying little Frederic into his chair, and surrounding him with a barricade of bright tins, his favorite playthings, in whose polished surfaces, concavities and convexities, his little round face was reflected in all manner of grotesque proportions, at which he shouted and crowed as if he were the most laughable object in the world, to himself, and which we should all be, men and women, were we not at the same time the most pitiful, she went about her household ways. There was the spare bed-room to arrange. She had ascertained from her husband that this was once Lucy's room in her innocent girlhood, and so she devoted it at once to her use; there were her own bed-clothes to take off and be replaced by mother Adams' finely wrought counterpane with the net fringe—her modern bowl and ewer to be removed to make place for those that had been there years before, old-fashioned and quaint, with blue grass, blue women, blue trees and skies upon them, for it would "seem more like home to the poor wanderer, no doubt," said the womanly heart.

She made rather slow progress, for Mr. Adams' annual journeys and their occasions, *namely*, to Commencement at Yale and the meeting of the General Association, were as well known to all the parish, could be as safely predicted as town meeting or Miller Bishop's day for grinding salt. Therefore, when it became known that he had started off to B—the general and individual curiosity was greatly excited; divers people felt moved to call on Mrs. Adams, and were not particularly enlightened when told in her quiet, prudent way, that her husband had gone after an invalid friend.

So they went on their way, like John Bunyan's pilgrim, though, perhaps, with not quite so serene spirits, and in due time, Mr. Adams came on his. He lifted from the carriage a pale, sorrowful child, and old Deacon Guthrie, who suddenly appeared by his side, bent his white head toward the coming figure within, who shrunk back as if wishing the darkness of the grave to cover her. He lifted her out, the strong old man—how many times he had borne her on his shoulders with his little Mary—and, alas, she was now scarcely heavier than then, but her heart, how different; and bore her into the house.

There, she reclined in the great rocking-chair, by the fire, while Mrs. Adams removed her bonnet and cloak. Alas! the ravages of sorrow, sickness and remorse! The eyes of the minister and the old deacon met with the mutual inquiry, could *that* be Lucy Malden? That pale, emaciated woman with no signs of life about her save the bright hectic spot in the hollow of each cheek, and the great, heavy tears that stole slowly from beneath the closed eyelids and dropped upon her hands? Oh, those hands, poor, thin, weak, nerveless things, lying so listless upon her black dress—were they the hands that had once grasped theirs so caressingly—the fair, soft, busy things they remembered?

The tears fell from the poor girl's eyes not faster than they did from those of the minister's gentle wife upon the head of the friendless child, which she had already gathered to her motherly bosom. Old Deacon Guthrie drew again and again, the back of his broad, brown hand across his eyes; but the minister's face was hidden upon the shoulder of his child.

At last Lucy opened her eyes and met the kind, pitying glance of Mrs. Adams. "You are too good—too kind—my sin is so great!" she murmured.

"Not greater than His love," was the gentle answer.

And she was right. Few were the days left to this poor, erring one, but they were days blessed

beyond price, for through His grace, amid the pains of expiation and bitter repentance, even from the night of despair, hope was born—faint and trembling at first, but founded upon that rock from which springeth the waters of eternal life, followed by that faith and peace which the world cannot take away.

And, in the end, kindness and good will come too; in the end, we say, for at first, when it was known who this strange guest at the parsonage was, many a thoughtless and bitter remark followed.

"No matter what some folks did, they would be upheld in it;" and "if pride did fall, it wasn't every one could find so soft a bed," &c. But, thank heaven! these remarks were confined to the few, and even these, when they saw how humble and penitent she was—how, low as they were inclined to place her, she could yet find a lower place for herself, they had no heart to trample upon the poor crushed thing.

And her brother—what said he? Not a word save this—"Mr. Adams could do as he thought best, it was a free country; but for him, he wished to have no communication with *that* person. He had suffered enough."

Oh, no, not *enough*—he had yet to learn that

"Knowledge by suffering entereth;"

so God took from him, in the drear winter days, his idol, his baby heir, for he had married within a few years, and centred himself in his child. But he was a slow learner, and even after this, the kind minister could not say to the poor, weeping girl that her brother had forgiven her.

Then, she had but one wish left—to go once more to the village church—to be permitted to see the waters of baptism sprinkled upon the head of her child, and renew before His altar those vows which she had so sadly forgotten.

There was no division of opinion as to the sincerity of her penitence among the grey-haired elders, who met to consider her case in Mr. Adams' study; and yet they unwillingly acceded to this request, for, as they looked on her attenuated form and hollow face, they felt that she was too near her end to bear the effort.

But this was only a stronger reason with her; and, at last, she won their consent. It was a sunny day, the first Sabbath in March, that, supported by old Mr. Guthrie, she ascended again the old church steps, followed by Mr. Adams, leading her child. They would have led her to a seat beside them in their own pew, but, with a few words of touching entreaty, she begged to be permitted to follow her own way, and turned aside, with her little one, into the seat set apart

for the poor—alas, that there should be such a seat in our New England churches!

Ah, there was not an eye that did not soften—not a heart that did not melt with pity, when they saw that bowed figure and pale face, shaded by the deep black bonnet, sitting so humbly by the side of the poor, old widow Pardee. Yes, there was *one* eye—one *heart*—for Col. Malden, supporting his wife and carrying in one hand his hat, swathed in bombazine, came in, and without glancing to the right or left, passed up to his seat of honor, with his usual firm tread.

Did he understand the minister's touching petitions for that child and mother? We know not. Not until the good man requested, after the usual manner, that the child might be presented for baptism, and a bowed, trembling woman, leading a little child, came slowly up the broad aisle, did he turn round. Then, he started, gave one more hurried glance, and bowed his head upon the slip. Ah, he knew not, cared not, then, how many eyes were glancing back and forth from him to that moving figure, for he thought of the night when his boy lay dead before him, and with clenched hands, he had paced the room, while conscience whispered of the young sister left to his charge, of his sternness without kindness, his justice without mercy, and how God, finding him unfaithful in this, had taken home his boy, lest he too should become an outcast.

With an irresistible impulse moving him, he rose up, and walking up to the altar, lifted that child in his arm, while he placed the other through the trembling one of his sister.

The silence in that old meeting-house was like that around the bed of death, broken only by the smothered sobs of women, as the minister lifted his voice and baptized "*Anna Malden*."

He led her—rather carried her and her child—not back to the humble seat she had left, but to his own, where she had sat in her happy girlhood, and placed her between himself and his wife, while Mr. Adams gave thanks, through his tears, to God for that goodness which is able to reconcile all things to Himself.

A few days later—only a few days—while the snow of March fell softly and silently as God's long suffering patience upon the earth, they laid that tired one down in the old grave-yard; not where the grave of Col. Malden's little son lay like a white pillow by the sunken one of his grand-parents, but, as she had requested, in the distant corner where the poor and the nameless sleep with no memorial above them but the slender acacias that spring so thickly there, and in the sweet spring time scatter down showers

of fragrant flower petals upon the sunken graves. | she had worn in her guiltless infancy—meet
It was there they laid her, and before night, the | emblem, let us hope, of the robe she now wears
busy snow flakes had folded the brown mound | through the mercy of Him who is able to cleanse
above her in a drapery spotless and pure as any | from all sin.

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THE ESTRANGEMENT.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

"I don't see you and Amy Burton together any more; how is it? I thought you were inseparable."

"Oh, I have not seen her for some days. She is very busy, I suppose, helping her mother with some little things for the children before they all go to the country. Indeed I did promise Amy to go and spend some hours with her every day this week; but have not done so; for I scarcely feel the same toward her since that evening at Mrs. Guy's."

"Yes; I remember how tartly she answered you when you tried to persuade her to take a walk with us, while she wished to sit with old Mrs. Guy until our return. 'Tis strange she has not called since to make up with you."

"If she does not choose to she needn't. I can do as well without her company as she can without mine."

"I don't know about that, Sarah. You always thought a great deal more of Amy than she could think of you, or indeed, of any one; for she is rather of a selfish disposition, and seems to consider acquaintances rather as a trouble than pleasure. She used to have so many friends, and I know it to be her own fault that they dropt off one by one, until now they are scarcely on speaking terms with her."

"Mrs. Burton, I believe, was opposed to Amy keeping up an intimacy with so many of the school girls," said Sarah. "I have heard her say that she generally found such friendships injurious, or at least, useless to both parties, and that she wished her daughter to use some discrimination in the choice of friends, and not deem it necessary to be intimate with all who had chanced to be her companions at school."

"Perhaps so, but I imagine Miss Amy's own caprices had as much to do with it as her mother's wise sayings. I have been told that she often expresses a desire to drop entirely her old acquaintances."

"If she does, Anna, I am not included in the number."

"As to that I can't say," returned Anna, with a smile of significance. "You can, if you wish, consider that you are not in the list to be proscribed. For my part, I have been cool with her ever since I heard that she expressed herself so; not that I ever cared a great deal for her, but

even if I had, I would not give her an opportunity of slighting me. But put on your bonnet; I am going down the street to do some shopping, and I want you to go with me."

The young ladies were soon in the street. They had not proceeded far when Sarah observed the subject of their previous discussion approaching, unaccompanied. As they came nearer their eyes met, and Amy with a quick, bright smile hastened her pace, but Sarah carefully withdrew her eyes, and with a disdainful air moved on. Several persons passing at the moment, she took an opportunity to look back, and was gratified to perceive that the *cut* had produced the desired effect; for Amy, with a heightened color had paused before a shop window, evidently with a view to hide her mortification rather than to inspect the goods temptingly displayed.

But Sarah was not quite as well satisfied when she afterwards recalled the occurrence. She felt, though she would not acknowledge, that by her annoying pertinacity she had provoked the petulant reply from her friend that offended her. She knew, also, that Anna's insinuations were unworthy of consideration, for in such matters she was not scrupulously truthful; and the warm intimacy of the two had often excited her envy. Still, Sarah allowed the meaning words to make an impression on her mind, seeking to find therein an excuse for her unfriendly act, and resolving to entertain no thought of a reconciliation.

The next morning a servant handed her a bouquet which had been brought by one of Amy's little sisters. Ere she spoke Sarah knew whence it came, recognizing her friend's graceful, unstudied arrangement of the fair flowers, while on a strip of paper twined among them were traced two lines from a favorite song with both, in Amy's well known characters:

"We have been friends together,
Shall a light word part us now?"

For an instant Sarah's mind wavered; then returning the flowers to the servant she bade her give them back to the child who was yet in sight; and, hastening to her room where busy preparations were going on for her contemplated trip to the country, soon succeeded in banishing all uneasy reflections.

But in the country they often returned to disturb her perfect enjoyment; often in a merry pastime with her light-hearted companions—oftener still when wandering alone amid the grave forest lanes, till, her careless resentment dying away, she longed to retrieve her error and resolved that the day of her return home should witness her efforts to do so.

That day came at length; and with as much eagerness as she had left it Sarah returned to the gay, noisy city which had now the charm of novelty. Sitting that afternoon in animated conversation with her mother, she suddenly asked if the Burtons had come home yet; adding, if so she believed she would go and see Amy for a little while. The mother sighed as she answered, slowly,

"Yes, they have come home; they returned ten or twelve days ago; but, Sarah, you will never see Amy again."

"Never see Amy again," Sarah repeated, trembling. "What can you mean, mother?"

"I would not distress you by sending the mournful intelligence, my dear; but Amy was taken ill with the bilious fever in the country; they brought her home at once, but the day after their return she died. 'Tis a week to-day since she was buried."

Stunned and bewildered, Sarah sat in silence for some time; then throwing on her bonnet and mantilla hurried to the grave-yard unable to give credence to her mother's sad information. It was not long till she stood beside the family lot of the Burtons, where the green sods had been latterly disturbed to admit the young and lovely tenant. Yes, it was true: Sarah felt that she stood beside Amy's grave, and bitter, scalding tears welled up from her agonized heart.

An approaching step aroused her. The little sister of the departed one drew near, bearing a basket of freshly culled flowers, their bright hues thrown out in strong, sad contrast by her sombre mourning garb. She unlocked the gate of the enclosure and went in, followed silently by Sarah. It was the same child who had brought the gentle *peace offering* so scornfully

rejected: how the self-accusing spirit writhed at the recollection.

The little girl strewed her bright, fragrant blossoms over the grave, then sat down beside it, eyeing wistfully the broken sods, as if her loving gaze could penetrate the dark recesses of the tomb. Sarah, too, had sunk beside it; and their tears flowed together as they spoke of the departed—but how unlike the grief of the loving, bereaved sister, was the torturing sorrow of the *remorseful friend*.

"Amy spoke of you so often," said the child, as with choking sobs she related to her attentive companion all the particulars of the death scene, "she used to look around as if she wanted something, and say quietly, 'Sarah, dear Sarah!' then after awhile she would say again, 'oh, I would like to see dear Sarah if only once more!'"

And Sarah bowed her head in deeper anguish, and sobbed with convulsive violence as she fancied she heard the words repeated in that familiar tone which should greet her never again. Ah! how vividly in that moment did memory recall the past—the childish joys and griefs they had shared—the fond intercourse and unreserved confidence of girlhood—the thousand trivial instances of the love and kindness of the lost one—how all came crowding upon the oppressed mind of the mourner; but uppermost of all, in soul-harrowing distinctness came the thought of their last estrangement, her own unworthy conduct, and she groaned aloud in her unavailing agony, while the child's tears flowed afresh as she wonderingly witnessed the effect of feelings of which she, in her innocence, had no conception.

Not till the gloom of evening was spreading around, could Sarah tear herself from the resting-place of her friend. Then, still dwelling on the bright heart-smile from which she had turned so haughtily, and that last gift so recklessly spurned, she reverently plucked a sprig from the fair flowers that were shedding their fragrance above one as fair, as pure as they, to treasure as a memento of the lessons of gentleness and forbearance her chastened heart had learned at *Amy's grave*.

HELEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CHAPTER I.

WOULD that my good, far-off readers might all see and know New England! The earnest students of human life and human character, would that they might see the dear land of strong-hearted men and women who are daily making themselves masters and mistresses of the strong circumstances!

And the dwellers upon the even-toned lands, who yet are lovers of the uplands where the crags lie, and of the placid lowlands where are the "silver-footed streams," would that they might see the "rock-bound shore," and the rock-bound hills, the lakes spread out, and the streams gliding and sparkling afar, and the water-wheels, huge and little, at play with foam-wreath, crystal drop and spray! Would that they might know this one graceful, busy little stream, the Winnipissiogee; know all its windings and pretty ways, as I do! For, I doubt if, in all this land of rivers, brooks and "runs," there is a pleasanter stream. It comes slipping out of the blue lake of the same name; and runs along, along, now winding to hide among the trees, anon moving straight forward, beside the strong hills, the primeval woods, the green fields where the grain and the grass are waving, separating Meredith from Gilford, Sandbornton from Northfield, intersecting Franklin a little way, and then and there, meeting and wedding the state-lie Pemmijewasset, of White Mountain origin. Thence, under the new name, Merrimack, they go on constantly aggrandizing themselves, to the sea.

The Winnipissiogee is a thrifty, serviceable little river. I know not how many lakelets ("bays" and "ponds" the farmers on their borders call them) are strung along its course. Beautiful, beautiful lakelets they are, too, with graceful, ever-varying shores, and with graceful and ever-varying islands dotting them. Here fishing, with spear, net, and line, goes almost constantly on, by daylight, by twilight and by the red torchlight.

I do not know how many natural falls and artificial "dams" come across the stream at one point and another, intensifying its beauty. The Boston companies could tell. They estimated

the "power," as it were, by pounds and ounces, and then bought it of the farmers; and now their white dwellings and their stone factories rise in beautiful relief against the green hills over the river.

The Concord and Montreal Railroad comes to the river at Sandbornton Bridge, eighteen miles north of Concord; and, after that, keeps near it, crossing it several times, (for Winni is a capacious, impulsive river, with many a quirk and eccentricity individualizing it,) parting with it, finally, not until they come together to Winni's early home, the lake, at the Weirs.

Very pleasant, very thrifty villages stretch out here and there, on either side of the stream, with their sharp, white dwellings, only softened a little by green Venitian blinds, and shade trees and vines, and with the more tasteful cottage of these later days, having graceful gables, balconies, and all around them trees and vines and trellises. Here white spires rise and bells are heard; Sabbath bells in their time, school bells and factory bells in theirs; where are many "comfortable homes," comfortable homes so-called, and many "poor homes," poor homes so-called, but having as much comfort in them, perhaps, as the others, because having as much love.

At Sandbornton Bridge, one of the prettiest of these villages, my story lies; in that part of the village where the river bends so gracefully, and the banks are so green, and the trees wave over the water. There, a little more than half a century ago, lay the fishing-grounds of my maternal ancestor, for whom the township was named, (because he was the largest proprietor, and because he was the "Justice.") Now, when our story opens, that is, Deacon Cushing's cottage and garden and summer-house were there; and Helen Cushing, the heroine of our story, went tripping,

CHAPTER II.

To make a decorous little girl of Helen Cushing, was more than both mother and Professor Gaskell, Helen's teacher, could do. She would go flying and skipping; would throw away her sun-bonnet; would climb and jump, to high

places, from high places; would tear and spoil her frock; and yet, oh, such hoydenish ways! such a brown face! such brown arms! And then her arms were so round, so fair, so beautifully proportioned, too, naturally! It was too bad! That was what mother, and Mrs. Brooks, and many others said. Now, Martha Brooks, just Helen's age, was so different. *She* would do so-and-so, so-and-so; exactly as her mother told her. She, indeed, seemed to do right without being told. She was the pattern child of the village. Helen, and others as well, were always hearing what and how Martha Brooks would do; how she would walk demurely, as she saw her mother walk. "Like a woman," "as you see me and Mrs. Cushing," were Mrs. Brooks' rules; to which the girl gave watchful heed. Especially she watched Mrs. Cushing, who had a grand step, a grand bearing; then brought her eyes home to her own steps, to the flow of her own short skirts; and afterward turned them to Helen, as if she would say—"There! didn't I do that nicely?" Helen averted her eyes, if it was possible, before Martha's had time to encounter them. If their eyes met she curled her lips and said—"H'm! you do try so hard, Miss Martha! You wouldn't catch me trying so hard!"

"Sometimes the very best, the most affectionate and attentive little girl in my whole school," said Professor Gaskell; "then again, when I try to bring her to something that she dislikes, for some reason or other, she is inconceivably obstinate and difficult to manage. I sometimes think that she is well-governed, only when she is not governed at all."

Her mother said—"I am sure I don't know what to do with Helen! She is certainly the noblest, most generous-hearted girl I know, or ever have known; but her will is so strong, so headlong; I really, before telling her to do a thing, stop to consider whether it is something she will be likely to do willingly. She *will not* mind another's will; that is, readily, as Martha Brooks and Lillian Gaskell do. She *will not* be quiet and womanly like them. They are always so like little ladies! They never fly and tear and soil their clothes and make such perfect frights of themselves as Helen does. You will never see them doing it."

"Oh, well, which is the most agreeable little girl, after all?" asked her husband.

"Why, Helen. Anybody must think that she's the most natural and graceful; and the most affectionate, too. But so wild!"

"Let this be in God's hands, my wife Anna. We will be thankful to Him for the daughter He

has given us; and that she is a *child*. I hope that, in many respects, she will always be a child. A child, I must say, because, when we are no longer children, we are, the greater part of us, so stiffened and cramped, and fairly spoiled with all the arbitrary rules and regulations of custom, conventionalism, propriety and the like."

"But you must see that Helen—why Mr. Brooks calls her 'that runaway, Helen Cushing.'"

The deacon laughed.

"I don't see how you can always feel like laughing, let Helen do what she will," said his wife. "You must think that she is difficult enough to manage."

"Yes, but I pity the poor thing, whenever I hear her complained of; whenever I look at her and think that, even as now it is hard for her mother to direct her ways and make her go straight, so, by-and-bye, when she is a grown-up child, she will find it difficult to govern and direct herself. For, although it is the truth, my Anna, that the child of impulse, the woman of impulse (or of genius; for this is the same thing) is the truest, the divinest type of childhood, of womanhood, yet there is a great deal here in this life for them to do and to bear. They long to go their own free, glorious ways, to think their own free, glorious thoughts, and to speak their own free, glorious words. They long incessantly to do it. They must do it, or their whole soul and all that is in them, cries out, of the great inward suffering. Still, they must not often do it. For, you see how it is. When they are children, they soil their frocks, get the tinge of gipsies, spoil their curls, get boy-like ways; and their mothers and fathers will not let them do it. When they are women, society will not let them do it. Society sets them to walk, speak, laugh and do whatever they do by her rules, within her narrow walls. And, if, they stir and pine, and feel ready to die; and, if, on this account, in their impulsiveness—as we call it—they go looking for a place of escape to open, free regions, society meets them ghoul-like, and bids our woman of impulse stand, until she has read some of her laws and by-laws to her. You know, if you have ever thought about it, Anna, what unreasonable things these laws are. We all know. Still we all help perpetuate and enforce them; help make new ones, too, of similar foolishness."

"What laws? What are you thinking?" asked his wife, who sat mending some of Helen's torn embroidery.

"They are something like this; this is what

society reads to our worried creature who is trying to escape. 'The laws of God and of Christ are for the sanctuary and the closet. The laws of the land, the civil law, so-called, are for the bar, the bench, and the highway. But the laws of society, of conventionalism are for all places. And, by these, a woman must order her gait and her whole carriage, after graceful and indubitably respectable precedents; must not go off long rambles and rides, scouring the country and getting a tarnished skin; for all this the Amazons do; must not speak loud, or laugh loud, even; must never lose command of herself, so as to show enthusiasm, or warmth, or great earnestness in any subject; for all demonstrativeness is folly; all enthusiasm, weakness and want of self-command; all decided expression of beliefs and opinions, unwomanly, and calculated to set her down with a certain portion of the other sex.'

"What droll things you are saying, Horace!" interrupted Mrs. Cushing, laughing. For her husband was half-laughing, although, now and then, as he talked, his eyes filled and took an expression of pity; for, in his fancy, he saw his beloved Helen, a woman, standing trembling, aching, with her bonds, and yet hindered by the grim impersonation of society, whenever she would lay them by, to be governed, or rather to be "made free indeed" by the spirit and laws of the gospel of Christ.

"What then would you have Helen be and do?" asked Mrs. Cushing.

"Now that she is a child," he answered, with serious tones, "I would—why, I would not, of course, have her trouble her good mother too much, with spoiling her clothes, and taking her own course. But I would gladly see her happy, in the free, buoyant life for which her Creator has so richly organized her. And when she is a woman, if she lives to be a woman, I pray my God—there is nothing I pray for so earnestly, as that she may love Him dearly, dearly; and the Saviour, finding gentleness, true womanly, Christian dignity, and, at the same time, freedom in Him. I know the poor child will miss it often; I believe it will be, oftenest, when she feels herself fettered and galled by the ways of the world, so that she must break away. She will suffer in this. But God will see it all. He will understand the child of his own hands. If He will keep her near himself; if she can find in Him the strength and repose that I am sure (sure, I am; for I too was a child of impulse,) she can never find in forms and proprieties and conventional prettinesses, this is all I ask for her. There she comes. Helen, darling."

"My father!"—catching his hand and kissing

it, in passing. "Mother!"—kissing her mother's cheek. Then Helen turned her large, beautiful eyes, from mother to father and said what so often she was saying, only in varying forms—"Oh, I'm glad I've got home! I don't like to go to school. I don't want to be anywhere, where I have to sit so still. See, mother!" spreading the skirt of her frock before her mother, "I kept my frock as clean as Martha Brooks did, to-day. I didn't play any though," pouting, and with filling eyes, "I knew I couldn't play and keep my frock clean; and I meant to keep my frock clean, any way. It made my head ache though, keeping so still all day. I can't bear it! I hate it!" She threw away her bonnet and basket, with the air of a thoroughly unamiable little girl.

"Come here, my daughter," said her father, putting out his arms to enclose her. "What would you say, if, after this, you might play as hard as you please, and never hear one word about soiling your frock?"

"Or tearing it?" asked Helen, eagerly.

"Yes; or getting your hair out of order, or going without your bonnet," added the father, smiling at the wistful, upturned face. "If you might be left to take care of yourself, in these matters, what would you do?"

"I should be so glad, I would go over the moon, almost like that!" giving a joyful bound. And then, coming gently up before her parents, and twisting her fingers with theirs, she added, "And I wouldn't tear them, or do anything to them, then; I'd be so careful; I should be so glad not to hear anybody saying—'ah, don't, Helen, do that; don't do this; don't go there; don't come here; you'll tear your frock, or do something to yourself.'"

Her father enclosed her in his arms, called her "darling" and kissed her. He said—"Go and ask mother how it is to be, after this, if you do soil your frocks."

Comforted by her father's kindness, she went to her mother with a beaming face—an angelic face it was when she was happy and elevated—and said, "How will it be, mother, if——"

"If?——"

"If I do tear my frocks and soil them, and all such things, when I am just having a good time and can't any way help doing it?"

"Bless her!" said the mother, looking at her husband with filling eyes. "Bless father and mother's darling!" kissing the child, "it is nothing if you do. You shall hear nothing more about it. Mother will just mend them and make them clean again, and that shall be the last of it."

She laughed; the deacon laughed, in the way he had when he was thoroughly pleased and gratified with his wife. Helen tried her best to laugh. But it would not do. Her lip curled and quivered more and more; her eyes filled more and more with the blinding tears. Snatching kisses from the hands of each, therefore, she ran away, as her parents understood, for a hearty little fit of weeping by herself.

CHAPTER III.

"E'm! Miss Helen! what will you do now for somebody to help you and Lillian over the brooks and to keep the cows away, when I am over to grand-pa 'P'?" asked Luther Gaskell, one day, with an air half of good nature, half of covert anger. He was thinking how many times Helen had repulsed him, when he came running to her with the most benign intentions of giving her help.

"I never asked you to help me over the brook, thank you, Mr. Luther! I was never afraid of the cows!"

"I've seen you look back and watch them, when you and Lillian were over in the chase lot. I've seen you!"

"You never!"

"And I saw you take off your little scarlet shawl and roll it up and tuck it under your arm, so that the cross oxen needn't be after you."

"Oh, you didn't! I was never afraid of anything. And I never will be."

"I'll leave it to Lillian. Didn't she, Lillian?"

But gentle Lillian could never remember about such things. She loved them both too dearly to say aye to one and nay to the other. With a beautiful tact, therefore, she called their attention to some new thing, and their quarrel was at an end. In a moment, they were cuddled close together over a picture, a book, or a microscope and flower, insect, or bit of moss.

This was when they were children. When they came to be young man and young woman, Luther still helped Helen, was still of service to her in an infinite variety of ways; but without any appeals, either open or covert, on her part; without any subsequent acknowledgments, even in her worst straits; even when the breakers started to overtake her, with a strong "undertow," as one time they did, when the two families were at Nahant together. He saw the breaker; saw that it was a mighty one, mightier than any of its predecessors had been; saw how composedly Helen stood, with the wind snapping her ribbons and skirts, watching it; and he went dashing up on one side, at the same instant that

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the wave was dashing up on the other. He just saved her that time. Her feet were going from under her, when he caught her and held her fast; thinking—egotist that he was, every moment of his life—"Now, this time, at any rate, she can't say that I needn't have come; that she could have done well enough without me. She'll have to own up to it, this time; and be a little more gracious." He deserved that she should say, afterward, when he sought her acknowledgments—"You needn't have come. I can always take care of myself. People needn't think that I can't, and be always watching me."

"I don't think you are a very grateful girl."

"You don't know, then. Nobody is so grateful as I am to people who help me and do things for me as my father does, without looking and appearing as if they thought I ought to go on my knees before them for what they have done." Then she turned away from him and joined her parents.

Luther stood looking off upon the sea, saying within himself—"If I had helped Martha Brooks like that? H'm! Martha is ready to go up on some throne, somewhere, if I just open a gate, or a door for her. I think this Miss Helen is a lofty, queer thing, any way! If she can take such good care of herself, she may try after this. Then she will come to her senses."

He smiled and snapped his finger at this new idea. He smiled and snapped his finger again the next day, when he stood still as the column against which he leaned, to see her hunt for her father, in hall and piazza, amongst pairs and groups of gentlemen, who had their eyes following her, all the while, and who murmured comments on her beauty. Luther heard them, and he knew from Helen's kindling face that she did.

"Would you like to have me find your father for you, Helen?" asked he, coming leisurely forward.

"No!"

"Heu! vexed that time because he did not earlier come to her assistance! He was sure he never saw one so unreasonable. He was sure he was angry at *that* rebuff, made in the presence of so many; of so many who had shown indubitably that they were jealous and envious of his connection with her.

He went straight by her after that for two days. This grieved her; for she was conscious of half-deserving it. On the second morning, she neither talked nor ate; she only drank coffee, and this was more for the sake of hiding her tears behind her big cup, than for any relish she had for the coffee. It happened that Luther

saw the tears. It happened, moreover, that out of his poor vanity, his features put on an expression of triumph at the sight; for he read her emotion aright; and it was by no means a little thing, even this tacit acknowledgment of his power over *her*—the grandest girl there, the grandest at the Bridge, the grandest wherever she was, however surrounded by grand mothers and daughters.

Helen knew that he saw her tears; for their eyes met. She knew that he exulted in them; for she saw that expression on his face; and, after that, she had no more tears behind her coffee cup.

That morning, when he came to ask her to go out with him to the rocks, where Lillian was, she simply said—"No, sir!" with a slight and most stately inclination of her whole frame.

"As you please," was his reply. And, from that time, they seldom came together. When they were together, they seldom spoke directly to each other; and when they did speak, seldom interchanged a dozen sentences without being in a dispute, more or less acrid. Until the time came when Luther would leave home for college. Then his mother and sister wept; and Helen, in spite of herself, wept with them; not so much that he was going, as that she felt for Mrs. Gaskell and Lillian; and, besides, she blamed herself for many instances of rudeness and ingratitude to Luther himself. She thought it would be a relief to her then, especially after he was gone, if she made some little concessions to him and asked him to forgive her; and to think of her, when he was away there alone, as being his good friend. She thought she would do it, if he came in just before going, to bid good-bye to them, and if he seemed gracious toward her. He came in, one hour before he was to start, already dressed for the journey. Helen was sitting in the wide, shady hall to study her lessons.

"So you are ready to go?" remarked she, half her good-will vanishing at sight of the vain air with which he carried himself. He did not, even in that hour of parting, she saw, forego his egotism, forget himself and his fine, new shirt.

"Yes, I'm ready."

"Well, I hope you will have a happy, good time." She bent her head so that she could no longer see him; and the tenderness, the penitence came back. "I hope you won't be sick there among strangers. But if you are, you must think of the friends you have left here, and be happy in thinking of them."

Luther was touched. He leaned against the balustrade near her, bending his eyes to the floor.

"And any time, when you are sitting in your chamber alone and thinking of home, you mustn't think of the times when I have been unreasonable and cross with you. You must think of this morning, when I tell you that I am sorry for it all, and want your forgiveness." Her voice was unsteady; and so was Luther's, when he answered—"Oh, indeed, I have nothing to forgive. It is I who have been foolish and abrupt with you. I have been a vain, proud dog, many a time. But it is natural for me to be so, I believe. I often see it in myself, especially when I notice how different you are in this respect; and almost hate myself for it. It does no good, though. I can't cure myself."

"We all have our faults," answered the gentle voice. "Come in here where mother is. Mother wants to see you before you go."

She wept without restraint at her mother's touching words of parting; wept so that she was shaken, when she held his hand at the door, without hearing one word from him; only feeling his light kiss on her forehead; wept in her chamber, afterward, many times, for many days; then, as the days, weeks and months passed, comforted herself (and Luther too, if she might believe what he wrote in return) by writing, first, little postscripts in Lillian's letters to him; then little notes to be enclosed; and at last, long, closely-written letters, under her own seal and superscription.

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER spent a part of every vacation with the family of an uncle in Boston, whose namesake he was; travelling with them, to the mountains, the "Great Lakes," the Canadas and the Falls, in the summers; to the western and southern cities in the winters. He studied; he kept good company. He, by all these means, improved himself inwardly; and in the sedative process of intrinsic acquisition, he parted gradually, in a considerable degree that is, with his outward "pomp and circumstance" of being a fine fellow; a finely dressed fellow; of being Professor Gaskell's only son, the childless General Gaskell's namesake and heir. And, by the time he was ready to commence his law-studies, with the Messrs. Burke and Melton—a firm then most distinguished of any at Manchester—he and Helen were "engaged." That is, it was settled between the Cushings and the Gaskells—Luther and Helen inclusive, of course, although they had less enthusiasm than any others in the affair—that, when his studies were over, and he was ready to be established, he should take the

building, once Judge Luton's office; of late, Professor Gaskell's study, for his office; the fine house, once Judge Luton's, of late, General Gaskell's, for his dwelling; and Helen Cushing for his wife, for the keeper of his house and his home-comfort. To Luther, even chastened as he was by the years, this was a matter of pride and of triumph, rather than of inward joy. To Helen—before the poor girl gave the asked for vows, she thought that she could be happy as mistress of so beautiful a home close by her parents, and with so well-educated and moral a man for her husband. But, by slow degrees, she came to wear the betrothal as if it were a fetter; and a fetter the most galling, when Luther was near. This was frequently; for Manchester was not far off; not more than two hours ride; and he often came up for the Sabbath.

Helen was dissatisfied with what she believed to be Luther's feelings toward herself. He was fond and proud of her. At any time, when they were together, in public, she could see in his looks, challenges of admiration for herself, and for himself, congratulations that she was his bride. This, out of her very nature of free independence, she loathed. She knew that such a trait in his character must cut him off from the high respect and esteem she longed to feel for her husband; must cut him off more and more, the closer they were united by outward ties. She dreaded that, at length it would cause her to condemn him utterly. Over this she trembled and shed many tears. One time she wept when he was by her side; when he was beseeching her to accompany him to a great gala of "session-time," at the capital. She was not well and strong, she told him; and begged to be permitted to remain at home where it was cool and still.

"I assured the Burkes and Meltons that I would positively be there," urged he, with an impatient tone.

"Yes, Luther; and so *you* can go," in the gentlest voice. "You can go; and the next morning we will sit here and you shall tell me all about it."

"I shan't go unless you do. I promised to bring you. Mr. Burke is to bring his wife, Mr. Melton his wife and daughters; and they all want to see you. Under these circumstances, you will go, of course."

"My head aches all of the time, lately. I can hardly eat enough to keep me alive. It is so sultry, the sand is so dry and burning-hot, and then at the hall there will be such a crowd, I would not know how to live. I should only faint and be a trouble to you."

He took the aching head to his breast; called

her his "beautiful;" and renewedly begged her to go with him; since, without her, he could have no pleasure in going.

She assented; but with a choking voice; with the feeling that, in him, she would have a hard, exacting master, all the rest of her days.

CHAPTER V.

THEY went to the capital. Luther had the satisfaction of seeing it with his own eyes and of hearing it from others, that Helen Cushing was the handsomest, the most glorious girl in that whole company; that she was, as one said—and he was the prince of connoisseurs, in Luther's mind—"only a little less than the angels in beauty." Yet, mingling with his pride, was a half-defined apprehension of some evil coming, caught, although he was hardly aware of it, from something unwonted in Helen, in the aspect of her beauty, the character of her bearing toward him and all who came near; for, of all the various moods of beauty and still reserve, in which he had at different times seen her, there had never once been anything like that, or equal to it. The purest lily was not equal to her face, save when a bloom, softer than that of the rose, lay on her cheeks, and a ripeness fresher than that of the cherry on her lips. Her eyes, all pupil nearly, by the dilation of that organ, had a depth and brilliancy, an earnest seriousness and elevation in their expression, that made him cower before her, and feel that he ought to be lying, like a spaniel, at her feet. She was gentle and courteous toward him—he had never before seen her so gentle and courteous. But he felt how she deprecated being there; and how, inwardly, she was laying it up against him, his bringing her, against all her representations of what was needful for her comfort. Well, she was mighty imperious and self-willed, at any rate, gently as she was carrying herself toward him, he was thinking, when he felt both her hands clasping his arms, felt her weight more, and more, and then felt her sinking at his side. She had suffered all that she was able to bear. Now, although she did not utterly lose her consciousness, she lay in Luther's arms pale and helpless as if she were dead; and saying with sobbing, suffocating breath—"Oh, take me into the air, quick."

She had one fainting fit after another; and it was not until morning that she lay breathing naturally and sleeping.

It was found that she could not stand, when, after waking and sleeping until noon, she tried it, with all the thoughts of the dear, the longed

for home giving her perseverance. She must remain, therefore, and be kept very still, very quiet until the next morning, the physician said; she could not, then, even reach her chamber door without fainting.

The next morning, by wetting her head, fanning her, by supporting her as if she were a babe, she reached the gate of her home.

"Let my father," said she, when Luther would have taken her out of the carriage that brought her from the depot.

She clung to her father; not with strength; for of this she had little indeed. But with that yearning love the little child feels toward those who constantly sustain and bless its tender life. One look she gave with her dull eyes, to trees, flowers and bright river. Then she was borne through the dim hall, up the dim staircase, this thought all the while wringing the hearts of the father and mother, that the next time, perhaps, she would be borne by other arms than theirs; when they would only "follow;" when this would be all that was left for them to do for their child. Kissing her, with long, clinging kisses, they laid her on the bed, from which, a fortnight later, when many friends were in the room and at the doors, and the low voice of prayer was heard, she had not once risen. She had been unconscious since the first few days of her illness; and had suffered until now, as her father said to a neighbor—in a low voice, that the mother might not hear—it was no more to lift her, than it was to lift a babe. She had moaned and begged; begged that Luther would not be cruel to her; that he would not hold her so fast, and keep her there where men trampled, with their hard heels, upon her brain and chest. She said this to Luther, or to another, or to no one. For, fall where the eyes would, the poor, tortured brain took no cognizance of any new images.

Now, at the hour of which we would speak, the time had come, as they all felt, when it would suffer no more; when it would yield up all its old images, and sleep the sleep that we call death.

"Thou knowest, oh, Lord," were some of the words of the prayer, "that this is for thy servants a bitter cup——"

"A bitter cup!" sobbed the father, bowing still lower, borne to the earth by his overwhelming sorrow.

"Let it pass from them," was added to the prayer; "leave them their treasure, if Thou canst; if Thou in Thy great wisdom and love dost see that it is best. Thou knowest. We may always, in the darkest hours, put our trust in Thee; for Thou wilt uphold us with a loving kindness which is better than life."

"Better than life! better than life!" they heard, in thrilling, joyful, but faint tones, from the bed. The parents heard it. He who offered the prayer heard it; for they knelt near the bed. Her eyes were closed; her lips scarcely moved; but each syllable was heard, distinct and as if it were uttered in clear consciousness. Her physician, who had been standing at the door, with his folded arms denoting in a significant way that his work was done, came quickly forward, tried her pulse, watched her breath—himself scarcely breathing; others scarcely breathing, as they looked from him to the sick one, and from the sick one to him.

"I think," said the physician, turning to the parents, with his fingers still on her pulse, "there is a change here. It is possible that this is only one of those sinking fits common in typhoid fever. Uncommonly severe it is though, if that is what it is. I never saw anything like it. Never."

While they bathed her and applied other restoratives, she murmured again, in a sweet, child-like voice—"His loving kindness is *better* than life."

The cup passed. Their treasure was spared to them. They wept as they gave thanks, and repeated the words so endeared to them—"Thy loving kindness is better than life." They bowed themselves even as they had done in the hour of their despair, in entreaty that they might be worthy the great blessing; that she, their precious child, might be God's servant; she might be kept evermore, as it were, in the hollow of His hand; and that they might never, oh, never! see the hour, when they would be constrained to say to Him—"Would that Thou hadst taken her then, in the dewy freshness and purity of her life's morning." (TO BE CONCLUDED.)

COUSIN HARRY'S REFUSAL.

BY A. L. OTIS.

"My dear, here is your great-coat," said my uncle's second wife, as he was about to drive off with his new span of horses.

"My dear, I don't want it."

"But, John, it is such a raw day."

"I am dressed for that, my dear, and do not miss my coat."

"I think it looks like rain, John."

"If it rains, I shall stop somewhere till the shower is over."

"John, dear, do take your coat."

"I don't want it, my love, the sleeves are too tight to drive in, and it will only make me uncomfortable."

"Dear—if you don't take it you will make me very uncomfortable"—spoken in a whimpering tone, which with the sudden pulling forth of a pocket handkerchief had the desired effect.

"Well, give me the coat then. There, goodbye my love."

Our good-natured uncle drove off, and aunt went into the house, leaving us on the porch.

"I wouldn't marry for all the beauty, wit, money, or goodness in the world," said my forty-seventh cousin Harry, energetically and scornfully. "I do hope that if I am ever so deluded and infatuated, and lost to common sense as to ask any one to have me, I may meet with a refusal, a real snub."

My father looked at him keenly at first, and then smiled covertly. His eyes met mine at that instant. I was smiling too, merely because he did, but he said,

"Come, Hal, don't make such a wish before ladies—it might tempt some one to make a trial of your powers of resistance. Now, there is Sophy, smiling in all the consciousness of being able, with a little effort on her part, to put you in a position to receive the snub you are wishing for. No—you needn't look so incredulous; she has the gift of eloquence, and can persuade persons out of the evidence of their five wits, or out of their pet opinions. She actually talked me into moving to town two years ago, and stranger still, made me believe I was happy there. If she had not gone to spend six months with her aunt, I should have been in the city yet; but my mind righted while she was away, and I found I could be contented only here. She

keeps her brother Tom completely deluded as to his own wishes, and he has given up his idea of going to sea much to his mother's joy. I don't really know whether I shouldn't be afraid of her if she were not such an honest girl"—and my father looked at me fondly, adding—"And so generous a one."

This praise quite quelled my rising anger, but I could not help saying,

"Perhaps Harry will think I have deluded you into that belief against all truth."

"No, I shall not," Harry answered, promptly, "neither will I believe you can talk me into wishing for matrimony."

"Try, Sophy," said my father, mischievously.

Harry looked polite, and said, "I don't suppose my heart more invulnerable than other people's, but I really think my head proof against the arguments of even so eloquent an advocate"—bowing to me with a little sneer.

I said nothing, not being pleased with his ironical reference to my eloquence. My father made the matter worse by seeing through my feelings, and exposing them.

"Now Sophy is angry. I was wrong to tell on you, wasn't I, Sophy?"

"You need not prejudice strangers against me, dear father, by betraying my unfortunate talent. You know I can't help it. I see that now it will be, as it used to be at school, when the girls said, 'never mind Sophy she could persuade you black was white,' and 'don't ask Sophy, or perhaps we shall all change our minds,' or 'Sophy will convince us we are wrong, so we won't ask her.' Nobody will care for me soon. I see that Henry feels like shunning me." I was struggling to speak distinctly, and not give way to my sudden feeling of grief. My dear father's voice trembled as he replied hastily,

"Oh, bless me! no, child—nobody shall shun you, nor want to either. Why, my dear, I have heard that no girl was ever so beloved by her schoolmates as you—and, dear child, you are the life and delight of the house——"

I saw that my father's feelings were carrying him away, and afraid he would make Harry laugh by his foolish fondness, I hastily retreated to the parlor. I determined that Harry should not hear me say one word, except necessary replies to

questions, during his stay, which was to continue during the college vacation. But this was not natural to me, and my spirits sunk under the effort to repress every expression of them. Harry observing this, kindly overcame his first feeling of repugnance to the eloquent woman, and tried to lead me into conversation. He very soon succeeded. Indeed I could not have kept silent much longer, and it was better that I should begin in answer to his effort than of my own accord. I was so unguarded as to be led by my artful cousin, to the very topic I had especially resolved never to touch upon. I suppose he thought nothing but expressing my opinions on the subject of matrimony would restore my good-humor. So he descanted upon the various excellences for which wives were to be selected, mentioning as the grand crowning accomplishment good housekeeping, and asking my opinions thereupon.

It had always excited me to anger, to have that one selfish consideration placed first on the list of a wife's qualifications, and I began to reply too warmly to notice the amused look which my cousin's face wore. I had just said—"a poor man should certainly, for his children's sake, have a useful wife. She should by all means be a good housekeeper. But a rich man, who can afford a hired housekeeper, need not take that into consideration, except as evidence of a disciplined mind. I should despise him for so doing as I would the wealthy owner of a fine country-seat, who should fell his forests, level his hills, and lay out all his grounds as kitchen garden"—when seeing the smile which showed that my enthusiasm was merely looked at as something advantageous to my complexion, and that my opinions were not thought of the slightest consequence, only listened to for politeness sake, an angry resolve entered my heart, which made me raise my head, fix my eyes on his and continue my speech, with the full force of the gift Nature gave me. I first demanded—and obtained—attention to my meaning—then respect for my opinions—then conversion to my views—but Harry was not aware of all this. I felt it instinctively at the time, and the next day laughed in my sleeve when I heard him discussing the same topic with my father, using unconsciously my very words, growing warm where I had, and astonishing my father to such a degree that he exclaimed,

"Why, Hal, you're a match for Sophy!"

From that time Harry sought me with amusing pertinacity—in the pantry, where we discussed the merits of pickles and jams—in the library, where our favorite authors afforded subject for

argument—in the garden, when we disputed about the relative beauty of the seasons—and under the starlit sky, about which we had many things to settle.

In the meantime I bore a secret resentment to Harry. He had not come forward in manly strength and candor, to hear what the supposed weaker party had to say for itself, but he had been compelled to a favorable judgment against his will. I did not enjoy my triumph at all, so sorry was I to be disappointed in him.

One day when I was in the garden, looking into the heart of a pond lily while Harry expatiated on its beauty, he suddenly arrested the tide of his eloquence and turned it into another channel, letting it speak passionately from his eyes. As I read his look I only smiled scornfully, and turned my head slightly from him. It was enough, words would have made the question and answer no plainer. We were walking in silence toward the house, when my father unfortunately met us.

"Dear me!" he cried, "you look, Hal, very much as if you had been taking the part of advocate of matrimony, and had found Sophy no convert!"—then seeing from our disconcerted countenances how near he had come to the truth he never even suspected, he stopped short in his walk, reddened, made some off-hand remark about the weather, and passed on.

I could not help laughing. Strange to say this laugh gave Harry hope. Some one has truly said, "In fact for most men the nature of woman is a sealed book, and must necessarily ever remain so. They love them, and hate them, admire them, and condemn them, flatter them, and abuse them, do anything, and everything, but understand them." Harry little thought I was laughing as much at him as at my father. He fancied I had only put on that scornful look, and had now given up that play.

He waited till my father had left the garden, and then said—"Dear Sophy, I must hear all in plain words. Do not speak yet. I do wish we could agree upon this one thing, this one proposition I am going to make."

"Well, what is it?"

"That we shall be happy together, happier for being together throughout our whole lives, that I, as husband, may be the most blest man in the world, and you as my wife the most cherished woman. Shall it be so?"

"No. Matrimony has been the dream of your life. I cannot take advantage of the vulnerability of your heart, doubtless deluded by my eloquence. Pray keep a right mind, and do not let it be overpowered by a silly woman's tongue."

"Sophy, do be in earnest, and do not quote me against myself. I ask you now to accept my hand. Think of nothing else I may ever have said."

"No, Harry, I cannot forget that in cooler moments, you expressly declared your wishes respecting the conduct of any lady toward whom you stood in this position, and in accordance with your own wish I must snub you. I wish you had chosen a prettier name for it."

Harry's sorrowful glance met mine, which was cool and unmoved. He turned angrily away, leaving me ashamed of the ungenerous mode of refusal, but not regretting the refusal itself, for I did not know I loved him. It was not till I saw that he had too strong a mind to let passion govern it; not until I saw the power of his will in quelling his unhappiness; not until my heart began to glow with admiration of his manliness, in not trying to conceal but to conquer his disappointment—that I began to feel the bitterness of despair at his success in regaining the true balance of his mind, and the cheerfulness of his disposition.

He left us to go back to college, and a little old-fashioned song, which he sung on the last evening of his visit, shut out from my heart every hope of what it had begun to pine for—his love.

"Fare you well, my pretty Sophy,
I must e'en excuse you,
All our little quarrels, Sophy,
Now I'm going to lose you.
I've hardly kept my bosom free,
And you, I fancy, guess it.
Now are you displeased with me?
Though you won't confess it,
Though you won't confess it."

He evidently thought my mind as easily freed as his own, or he would not have thus ungenerously referred to the repentance he had perhaps discerned; but either my feelings were stronger or my will weaker, for I could not be cheerful. I could not forget him, and became very silent, to my father's great annoyance.

"Ah," I heard him say once, "it used to be such an amusement to hear Sophy when in an eloquent mood, but Hal fairly out-talked her, and like a humbled parrot she has never spoken since—'Author forgotten and silent of currentest phrase and fancy.'"

I looked forward with dread to Harry's return in the winter. I feared that his quick sight would read my weak, fond woman's heart, and perhaps his quick wit show it up in ridicule to his offended feelings. I had seen him subdue his love. That mine should still exist for him to laugh at was intolerable. Oh, how my heart quailed within me, and my trembling limbs sank

under me as I heard my father greeting him in the long hall, and in answer to inquiries after the health of the family, saying—"As for Sophy, I believe she must have made a vow to save all her eloquence for your return, for she has grown silent—utterly silent."

I glanced fearfully at my cousin's countenance as he entered the parlor, expecting to see there coldness or indifference, but his eyes beamed gladly on me, and there was a very hopeful flush on his face. The pressure of his hand too, which long prevented the escape of mine, betrayed some trepidation.

My father for once guessed at the real state of affairs, and, catching up his hat, fairly ran out of the room, muttering in the most incoherent manner something that bore small resemblance to any known tongue.

Harry took my hand, which lay on the sofa pillow, saying—"Ah, Sophy!" which sent the blood flushing to my cheek. But I could not reply to that remark. It was followed by another equally unanswerable, "Sophy, I could not forget you." Then after some hesitation, "I suppose I could live without you, but these months of absence have been so dreary. I come back to you weary in spirit, hungering for the delight and zest communion with your mind gives, longing to see things through your cheerful eyes. If you would not have me waste life in half efforts and gloomy reveries, be to me, I pray you, my ever present counsellor, the joy of my life—my wife, Sophy."

I could not say a word, but Harry understood my faint effort, and he had been sitting by me on the sofa sometime, when my sisters entered, followed by my brothers, and father, who advanced with a bold, careless look, that said, "Indeed I am entirely unsuspecting." We were all soon roused to mirth by my sisters, my father being in irrepressible spirits.

"Come, Sophy," he said, tell your cousin how I was floored in an argument with C——, the other night. Go over it all," which I did till my brothers became so uproarious that my mother fairly stopped her ears.

Still I was talking, when my father suddenly abashed me by saying—"Bless me, Sophy, what a flow of words.

"Mute and exuberant by turns, a fountain at intervals playing:
Mute and abstracted, or strong and abundant as rain in the tropics."

Then as I did not resume, he added seriously, "Now, Sophy, that you have your gift again, your first duty is not to let your old father

languish for the pleasant and refreshing waters of conversation."

"No, no," said my mother, "women should study to be quiet, and remember that—'*Le premier devoir d'une femme, c'est d'être jolie!*'"

"You need not have mentioned that duty surely, mother," said my father, "for she has

that fulfilled for her, and without taking thought of it."

Harry and I were on our way to the conservatory as this was said, but he heard it, and pressed my arm in a very flattering manner.

"Dear Harry," I whispered, "I will try never to make you regret choosing a talkative wife."

OUR "FREE AND EASY" VISITOR.

BY JEREMY BOGGS.

My father was a country clergyman in the state of Pennsylvania. In the early part of his pastoral career, his modest house, which stood on a main road, was chosen as a convenient place of sojourn, by such of his brethren as happened to be travelling along that way. Scarcely a week passed without seeing some peripatetic person snugly ensconced, for a day or more, under our roof, eating my mother's dinners with a relish that was quite worldly and humanizing. Every body who could by any latitude of construction, lay claim to a "call," made free with my father's hospitality. So that, between invalid clergymen, home and foreign missionaries, colporteurs, and agents for some five hundred indisputably benevolent institutions, we did a more flourishing business (*gratis*) than the "Washington tavern," forty rods below.

My father was a generous man, and believed in professional courtesies. His heart was large enough to take in the whole world, but his gross and tangible accommodations were small, and pretty much occupied by himself, Mrs. Boggs and the three young B's. This, added to the fact that my father never left home, and, therefore, had no opportunity of retaliating on his visitants, made the position of general entertainers rather irksome. But he was of a kindly disposition, and felt averse to giving an affront. By-and-bye, however, an event occurred, which led him to resolve to shut his door against all stragglers with whom he was not personally acquainted. I don't mean literally shut it, but he did it quite as effectually by signs and hints. Had *they* failed, I verily believe (and I say it with filial reverence) my father would have resorted to kicks—as he would have been perfectly justified in doing.

The event of which I speak took place as follows:—

One Tuesday forenoon, a huge chocolate colored carriage rolled up toward the house. It was a rusty, weather-beaten structure, and, as it moved slowly along, evinced its antiquity by creaks and moans. When it came to a stop, it uttered a deep sigh, in which the foot-board, the axles, the springs, and the dry leather generally, seemed to partake, and which expressed to my childish fancy (for I had been watching the carriage as

it lumbered up the road) a profound desire to enjoy a good, long, uninterrupted repose. In this, also, the horse—a cadaverous, wall-eyed creature—perfectly agreed, as I gathered from an inclination which he betrayed to lay down in the harness.

As this portentous vehicle pulled up at the usual hitching place, my father, who had, from his study window, beheld its approach with curious misgivings, heaved a soft sigh of forbearance (for he had only just got rid of the Rev. Ahasuerus Jenkins, who was somehow connected with the A. B. C. F. M., and by virtue thereof had mulcted my father out of two days board—lodging inclusive) and went to the door.

He arrived just in time to see a fat gentleman in the act of emerging from the mysterious conveyance. Either the fat gentleman was too large, or the carriage door was too small—at any rate, owing to some incompatibility of conditions, the egress was not easily performed. The fat gentleman first put forth one leg and felt delicately for the step, which he could not see. At last he found it, but so low down that the other leg was beyond withdrawal. This dilemma involved the necessity of pulling back the exploring member, and lowering both legs at once—a measure which, though adroitly conducted, completely failed. The fact was (and this was the only error in the calculation) the exit was not as wide by some two inches as the fat gentleman himself. Here, therefore, he was wedged, and getting more tightly stuck by trying to turn over, when my father came to the rescue.

"Keep easy a moment, my dear sir," said my kind father, measuring with his eye the vehicle and the fat gentleman, and seeking to reconcile the two.

A groan from the fat gentleman, and a shriek and considerable whining from sundry persons inside, mostly concealed from view by the obstruction, warned my father to work quickly. For a moment only he was puzzled—an expedient flashed upon him. The sufferer was thicker through in one direction than another. This understood, and the solution of the great problem was easy. The first movement then was to push the fat gentleman back again and start *de novo*. My father stated this view of the case to the

party interested, who at once coincided in it with a groan—which was followed, as before, by a shriek and miscellaneous squabble from the interior.

My father grappled the fat gentleman, and with one happy shove dislodged him and turned him on his side, whereupon, with a little striving on the part of the former, the fat gentleman slipped lumpishly to the ground and "stood (after some balancing) confessed." He was about five feet nine inches high. Gross weight, I should judge, three hundred pounds avoirdupois. Nose red and pimply; ears large and pendant; eyes small and moist; chin tripled with fleshly folds; all the details such as are most consistent with a fat gentleman. His apparel throughout was black and napless, and appeared to be filled to repletion. His white neck-kerchief revealed the sacred office.

The first decided act of the fat gentleman was to drop his lower jaw with a dull sound—like uncorking a bottle of faint beer—and turn up his eyes in the direction of a last year's bird's-nest in the trees overhead. He next grasped my father (who was whisking the dust from the stranger's coat) by the hand.

"Allow me to thank you, sir," he said, in a husky voice, (as became his fatness) "for your kind and timely aid. I have the pleasure, I presume, sir, (another shake—the fat gentleman quivering like a huge jelly) of addressing the Rev. Mr. Boggs."

"Yes, sir," responded my father, "and I am very glad I was here to render you this little assistance. I hope you are not hurt, sir."

"Oh, no," said the fat gentleman—"not worth mentioning; I'm used to annoyances of this kind. I only hope that my liver has escaped injury. If that vitally important organ is safe, I have no fear. Any accident, in its present delicate state, would prove fatal. I hope and believe, however," he added, with a cheerful smile, "that it is untouched." But the sharp twinge which convulsed his face immediately afterward, and which he vainly sought to conceal, contradicted him.

At the bare mention of "liver" another shrill shriek was heard, and a tall, scraggy female, whom my father had as yet only partially seen, jumped from the carriage and flung herself with an agonizing cry of "husband" into the fat gentleman's arms—almost throwing him off his balance.

Meanwhile the wailings, which I have already noticed, were renewed on a higher key, and I now saw that they proceeded from three children of the respective ages apparently of ten, nine,

and seven, whose dirty faces were thrust out of the door.

"Husband! liver!" (the latter, emphatic with anguish) were the only words I could detect in the broken phrases which the scraggy female lavished upon the fat gentleman. As for that individual, he did little more than allow himself to be hugged—taking the occasion to uncork several bottles, and steal another look at the bird's-nest.

I was wondering how long this queer tableau would last, when it was suddenly dissolved by the scraggy female jumping from the fat gentleman and commencing an attack upon the three children, whom she vehemently kissed and lifted to the ground.

"Mr. Boggs," said the fat gentleman, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, as if to shake off an imaginary scraggy female, "pray excuse this little scene. My wife is foolishly nervous. And now, sir, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mawkins—the Rev. Elijah Mawkins, of ——. This is my excellent helpmeet and devout companion, Mrs. Mawkins—daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Digsley, whom you have perhaps heard of; and these are our three olive plants. Come here, Dorcas, and Ebenezer and Zedidiah—and pay your respects to this kind gentleman."

My father good-naturedly patted the two boys on their scrub heads, and in the abundance of his cordiality kissed the grim cheek of Dorcas—the eldest of the olive plants.

"I am taking a little excursion for my health," resumed the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, (who had been smiling benignly while this little episode was going forward) "I found that my liver (the Rev. Mr. M. indicated the region thereof with both hands) incapacitated me for the proper discharge of my high and responsible functions; (Mrs. M. sighed) and my parishioners have generously granted me leave of absence for six weeks. I thought I could improve it no better than by making myself acquainted with the beauties of our great and glorious state. I had heard much, in particular, of your lovely village, and I find my expectations more than realized." As he spoke, the Rev. Mr. M. wafted his hand toward the town pump, a duck pond, and a sand bank, which were all in full view.

"It is indeed beautiful," he added—and his eyes rested beamingly on the duck pond.

"Truly charming," chimed in Mrs. M., riveting her gaze on the same attractive object.

There was a silence of some seconds, during which my father tugged nervously at his wristband—a habit of his when he was in doubt.

"Ah, Mr. Mawkins," said he, at length, "pray

walk into my house (a gulp) with your wife and children. This way, if you please."

But neither Mr. nor Mrs. M. heard him. They were still absorbed in the duck pond.

My father repeated his invitation.

"Certainly! thank you, sir: excuse my abstraction," said the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, "your scenery quite entranced me. But, sir, don't let us put you to the least trouble!"

"Oh, no! no trouble by any means, we won't hear of it," echoed Mrs. M.

"You are perfectly welcome," replied my father, (with another gulp) "to the comforts of our little home."

"Little!" rejoined the Rev. Mr. Mawkins. "How saith the poet?

'Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.'

So, after my father had directed my eldest brother to put the horse into the barn, rub him down and feed him well, and after the Rev. Mr. M. had taken out a few necessary articles—said articles consisting of three trunks, five band-boxes, four umbrellas, a half a dozen large paper parcels, and a geranium pot, (which Mrs. M. couldn't bear to leave behind her) my father piloted the Mawkins family into the house.

"It is indeed providential," said the head of that family on the threshold, "that my liver escaped injury"—and again the frightful twinge of his face contradicted him.

Mrs. M. turned to throw herself once more into her husband's arms; but was checked by the intervening persons of Dorcas, Zedidiah, Ebenezer, my father and myself.

The preliminaries of dusting and disrobing being over, (at which my good mother made herself serviceable to everybody at the same time) behold the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Mawkins and the accompanying olive plants tranquilly seated in our snug parlor, with the prospect of a dinner before them, for my mother had excused herself to enlarge the preparations for the meal.

"It's really very pleasant," observed the Rev. Mr. M., nestling into the sofa, "to travel with one's household, to feel oneself, so to speak, in the bosom of one's family. It almost realizes," he added, with a captivating smile, "the primitive caravans of Scripture." (It occurred to me, who was fresh from the Old Testament, that the former, however, carried their own corn—which the Rev. Mr. Mawkins' caravan didn't do.)

"You have a comfortable home here," he continued, taking a rapid inventory of the furniture.

"Yes," said my father, "it answers our purpose quite well."

"Ah," cried the Rev. Mr. M., springing from his seat as lightly as the three hundred pounds avoirdupois would permit. "Ah! what is this? A collection of New Zealand curiosities, as I live."

After examining them with intense earnestness, and asking a multitude of questions upon this and that article, he thrust his hand into his coat-tail pocket with an air of profound mystery, and drew forth a paper package as large as my fist. This he unrolled with the care and deliberation of a Gliddon. Finally he worked his way down to some small object, which he placed reverently in his right palm, and slowly stepping up to my father, held it out for his inspection.

My father adjusted his glasses and looked long and closely. Then delicately touched the mysterious treasure—then turned it over and looked as long and closely at the other side.

"Hum, ha!" said he, at length, "some rare species of shell, I suppose."

The Rev. Mr. Mawkins shook his head gravely and said nothing.

My father took another good long stare. "Well," he continued, "I can't guess, unless it's a chip from the old Constitution." My father spoke with the more confidence, because he knew that a large proportion of that venerable vessel was abroad upon the community in the guise of canes and snuff-boxes.

"No, sir, no," replied the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, dropping his words one by one, as though he feared the whole bulk of the revelation would prove too crushing for one delivery. "This, sir, is—the—great—~~toe-nail~~—of—~~Ram-Row-Jam~~—one—of—the—earliest chiefs of—the Tonger—Islands. It possesses a peculiar historical interest, as that chief was the first to admit the missionaries into his territory; of course I wouldn't part with it for the world, but as I see you have a passion for curiosities, allow me to beg your acceptance of a small portion. I'll hear of no refusal."

My father looked bewildered as the Rev. Mr. Mawkins cut off a slight paring from this fragmentary relic of the great Ram-Row-Jam, and placed it in his hand. My father, who was something of a *virtuoso*, with many thanks for the gift, wrapped it up intricately, and tucked it into a corner of his pocket-book for safe preservation.

The Rev. Mr. M. resumed his seat with the air of a man who had liquidated all claims which my father, or any of his family, already had, or might have at any future day, upon him—the Rev. Mr. Mawkins.

"By-the-bye," he continued, with a slight gesture, deprecatory of further gratitude on the

part of my father, "are you in any way related to the Hon. Joseph Boggs, of ——?"

"Yes, I think I am—third cousin—not nearer," answered my father.

"Indeed! you don't say so! Why! my wife is also a connection of that distinguished gentleman. How close is it, Mrs. M?"

"If I am not mistaken," replied that lady, "my sister's husband's brother married a cousin of the Hon. Joseph Boggs' first wife—I won't say certain, because I should not wish to tell a lie."

"Oh, ho!" cried the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, good-humoredly, "not so near as I supposed—still its a relationship. What can be more delightful," he continued—uncorking a smart bottle—"than to trace out one's family ties in all their ramifications."

As the Rev. Mr. Mawkins was expatiating upon this noble theme, dinner was announced.

My father rose to marshal his new-found relatives into the dining-room, when the Rev. Mr. Mawkins clutched him earnestly by the arm, and again begged of him in a voice of remonstrance to be at no extra trouble on *their* account.

"No, no," echoed Mrs. M., "we shan't allow it"—and she looked as though she had determined to resent the slightest exhibition of it as an insult.

The dinner was substantial and abundant. My mother, with true womanly tact, had made ample provision for our mountainous guest. She had not only cooked a vast quantity of sausages and ham, but she had left open one end of the table for his especial accommodation, and had arranged all the fundamental dishes within his reach. I have no doubt she expected (as she was willing) that he would make a clean sweep of them. He was flanked on the right by Mrs. Mawkins, and one child, and on the left by the other two children. My mother had thus thoughtfully adjusted them, so as to have the entire family under her eye, in one group. My father, and myself, made up the party.

So, after the Rev. Mr. Mawkins had asked a blessing, the dinner was begun. It soon turned out that my mother had hardly over-estimated the Rev. Mr. M's. capacity. Yet he did not seem rapacious: and I could not believe, as I glanced up from time to time, and saw another gap among the sausages and the ham, that he was the devastator, until I comprehended his style of eating. It consisted in slowly cutting off huge pieces and conveying them deliberately to his mouth, where they were at once swallowed with a slight throb. The phenomenon turned on the summary disposal which the Rev. Mr. Mawkins made of his food, when once out of sight.

In short, he was a maelstrom among the viands. I noticed, too, that whenever he made a foray, he drew off attention by uttering some contemporaneous remark. So that, if the foray was noticed at all, it would be regarded by most observers in the light of a gesture—an incidental emphasis. I remember one notable instance. The Rev. Mr. M. had been inveighing against the Pope, in reply to something my father had said, and he accompanied the regret that Napoleon did not crush that personage, by thrusting his (the Rev. Mr. M's.) fork into a double link of sausages, and bringing them with a firm, decisive movement upon his plate. It seemed to me a most perfect illustration of the savage treatment which the Rev. Mr. Mawkins would be happy to serve out to the Pope himself.

The conversation (and the Rev. Mr. M. was as great in talking as in gastronomy) ran on a variety of topics. Among many other things, that gentleman gave us a full history of his liver complaint, from its infancy to its present overshadowing proportions, with a complete list of the remedies he had tried without success; but expressed the hope—yes, the firm conviction—that the little pleasure trip would restore him to perfect health. But, alas, that tinge of the face. Mrs. Mawkins saw it, and again burst into a fond alarm. The Rev. Mr. Mawkins had described his case so vividly—uncorking so many bottles—licking his chops—and dwelling with so much unction upon the racier parts of it, as to affect my mother unpleasantly; she was quite pale and tremulous when he concluded the recital. I remember, too, that, toward the close of it (such is the force of sympathy) I fancied that I felt pains like those so eloquently portrayed, and I wondered whether I also was not a sufferer, in common, with the philosophic Mawkins.

The Rev. Mr. M. further improved the opportunity to call attention to the endowments of the olive plants; who, beyond the fact that among them they had upset a vinegar cruet or two, overturned the mustard and spilt the gravy into the pudding, had received no more notice than was necessary to supply their hereditary appetites.

"We have here," said the fond parent, affectionately stroking the soft, red hair of the eldest, "a real musical prodigy. Her bump of tune," he continued, feeling vaguely for its cerebral indication, "is, I am told by a competent phrenologist, of a most remarkable size. She could sing 'Auld Lang Syne' at the age of four years and—three months?"—with an inquiring glance at Mrs. M.

"Two months—two months," she replied.

"Two months! ah, thank you. You know best, my dear, for you have watched and trained her dawning genius as only a mother can. Well, by the advice of my scientific friend, at eight years she commenced taking lessons on the piano. Her progress was really wonderful. In eighteen months she had learned to execute 'Scots who hae,' 'I see them on,' and——"

"The 'Bristol March,'" suggested Mrs. M.

"Yes, and the 'Bristol March,'" continued the proud father; "but it is her sacred music that pleases me most. Her Windham, Ballerina and Coronation are peculiarly touching. The Rev. Dr. Dwight would have wept, indeed, at her Coronation. Some of my most powerful sermons have been composed in the hearing of her music. I took the hint from Milton. Yet she is a gay, young thing—a little too frivolous, I'm afraid," and he beamed lovingly on the juvenile phenomenon, who only giggled and ran out her tongue, and played harpoon with her fork upon stray pieces of bread about her plate.

"By-the-bye, Mr. Boggs, I think I saw a piano in your parlor."

"Yes, sir," answered my father, "it was a gift of my mother's. It's an old concern, and hasn't been played on these ten years. I have no musicians in my family, and I only keep it as a memento."

"Very fortunate coincidence," replied the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, "very fortunate. My Dorcas shall wake the torpid melodies of the instrument, and revive, I trust, mournful but sweet recollections of the departed donor." And Mr. M. threw himself back in his chair with the manifest consciousness of having said a very good thing.

I observed a slight shudder came over my father. "I assure you," he said, in a voice quivering with emotion, "nothing could give me greater pleasure."

"Ebenezer," resumed the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, after a slight pause, indicating that youth with the carving-knife, "Ebenezer, I design to raise for a missionary. He is a sober, steady boy, and will be, I hope, the means of much good in Timbuctoo or the Fejee Islands."

"I don't want to go there," blubbered Ebenezer, "my teacher says they eat folks."

"Ah, but, my dear, you must be willing to be eaten; you must be thankful for the privilege of being eaten."

"I don't want to be. What good would it do me?" and Ebenezer gave symptoms of tears.

"Well, my son," said the Rev. Mr. Mawkins, who was somewhat staggered by the very natural inquiry, "where would you like to go?"

"To India," responded the hopeful youth.

"And why to India, Ebenezer?"

"Cos there's where they make crackers!"

This worldly reply—so unexpected—caused the Rev. Mr. Mawkins not a little embarrassment; but he soon recovered himself. "Boys will be boys, you know," he observed to my father, with which apologetic remark, his eyes rested on Zedidiah, who was just then peering curiously into the dish of pudding sauce, on the brink of which his little, roguish pug-nose comfortably rested.

"Always learning something," said the Rev. Mr. M., musingly, "always learning something. I sometimes think that my youngest is the most highly gifted of all. He is forever exploring and investigating. Not long ago we caught him in the act of pulling a feather bed to pieces. The young philosopher had covered himself so completely with the contents that, at first sight, I supposed him to be some anomalous species of bird. He has, also, unknown to us, set traps for cats; this, in an older person, might seem cruelty, but in him it is only the development of mechanical genius. Why, it was only last week that he——"

"Ripped my silk dress from top to bottom," interrupted Mrs. M., whose face had been gathering wrath since the young philosopher was brought upon the carpet, "if he isn't cured of his tricks he'll soon be tearing down the house about our ears."

Zedidiah, it turned out, was the standing topic of dispute between Mr. and Mrs. Mawkins; and Mr. Mawkins, on this occasion, had presumed too much upon his wife's forbearance.

"Yes, and day before yesterday, he pulled the ribbons off my new bonnet," cried Miss Dorcas, who sided with her mother in this little family difference.

Mr. Mawkins was perplexed. He didn't know what to say—and so, like a prudent man, he said nothing.

In the course of events the dinner came to an end.

From the date of the dinner, to that of the catastrophe, which it is my purpose to record, our experiences of the Mawkins family may be briefly summed up as follows:—It was found indispensably necessary to commit the three young Boggsses to the precarious fortunes of a narrow straw bed in the dining-room, which bed was not made up until the elder of the Mawkinses had retired—about eleven P. M. This, taken into account with the fact, that said bed was far too limited for three persons, however small, deprived us of the needful quantity of

sleep, and we rose every day red-eyed and unrefreshed. The first oath I ever uttered was launched at the Mawkinses. The amount of purchases for the table was of course much increased. This not only involved a large expenditure from my father's little salary, but, what was worse, almost worried my mother into a fever, with running hither and thither, and attending to the culinary department, for she always insisted on discharging those duties in her own person. And to heighten her perplexity, the Rev. Mr. Mawkins always ate his meat in a proximately raw state, while Mrs. M. and the children couldn't bear it unless "done to a heavy brown." The perpetual oscillating between these two conditions nearly drove my mother out of her senses. As the Rev. Mr. Mawkins had promised, the tuneful Dorcas revived the torpid melodies of the piano—that is so far as they could be revived—some of them having been put to sleep forever by the breaking of the strings. Whether she succeeded in waking in my father's breast mournful but sweet recollections of the deceased donor is a mooted point. Perhaps, however, it was to conceal his emotions that he always withdrew, shortly after Dorcas commenced wrestling with the instrument, on a visit to the post-office, or elsewhere. As to the style of her music, I cannot speak advisedly, not having a good ear. I only remember that, in my poor judgment, her Windham sounded like the fabled wail of condemned spirits, and her Bristol March like the clatter of horses' hoofs upon the pavement. Zedidiah put his investigating turn of mind into practice at an early day by prying off the main wheel of our eight day clock, and throwing it into the well, with the design, doubtless, of sounding the depth of water. The youthful sage further exemplified his peculiar genius by testing the force of projectiles upon my favorite guineahen, in the course of which he broke one of her legs. I revenged myself by suspending him over the watering trough till he promised to abstain from further scientific research in that direction. The future missionary gave indubitable evidence of his sedate and thoughtful nature, by overturning my father's library, dislocating the leaves of the books, and marking his way with prints of dirty thumbs and dog-ears. "Scott's Commentary," a standard work, came in, I recollect, for a large share of the future missionary's attention. The Rev. Mr. Mawkins busied himself in various ways. He took a walk every morning (generally accompanied by Mrs. M. and one of the little M's.) under the guidance of my father, to some of the neighboring wonders, samples of which he invariably brought home. Among

others, were a piece of the new bridge, then being built across the river which ran through our village, a handful from the yellow sand-bank, and a fragment of the new church which was in process of erection for my father's use. These, he said, especially the latter, he should keep as treasures, not indeed on account of their intrinsic value, but of the delightful associations connected with them. Mr. M. also paraded extensively in the little garden behind our house. He thought the scent of the flowers benefitted his liver. I watched him, and found that, after every turn or two, he paused under our green-gage tree, and knocked off the finest plums within reach of his cane. I was uncharitable in my inferences at that time, but I am now convinced that the Rev. Mr. M. was liable to fits of an absent mind. He read largely, and derived so much pleasure from the perusal of a gigantic treatise on Scriptural Antiquities, by Calmet, that he expressed to my father an intense desire to procure a copy. One day, after the Rev. Mr. Mawkins had passed a glowing eulogy on the said Calmet, I judged from my father's looks that he was about to present the Rev. Mr. M. with that work, but he instantly checked himself, and made no proposition of the kind. I am sure that the Rev. Mr. M. would not have accepted it as a gift—indeed he once hinted as much. He also spent a good share of his time in cultivating and training the olive plants. He was not ashamed (as too many men are) to confess a little paternal weakness in the presence of strangers. I will only add that his appetite continued excellent, and that from day to day, he announced a decided improvement in his liver.

As for Mrs. M., she conducted herself in a very grim and exemplary manner, as became the daughter of a Digsley and the wife of a Mawkins.

It will be inferred from all this, that our experience of the Mawkins family was a protracted one. This is correct. It lasted till Monday morning of the ensuing week—six days. The Rev. Mr. Mawkins had designed to make only a brief visit. Every morning, after breakfast, he declared his intention of pursuing the journey, but always managed to defer it.

And now for the catastrophe.

My father's predecessor, the Rev. Jonathan Stubbs, had preached almost exclusively, for the four years of his pastorate, upon what are known as the Terrors of the Law. All his sermons were worked up in whole or in part, from this material. The larger and more influential portion of the flock, at last grew tired of it, and repudiated their shepherd, after one sermon more thundering than ever. My father, on the contrary,

preached the law of love, which there was a tacit understanding he should do, when he was called.

Thus stood affairs, when the Rev. Mr. Mawkins begged the privilege of supplying my father's place in the forenoon of Sunday. The strengthened condition of his liver, he thought, would enable him. My father, who was in ill health, acceded to the generous proposal.

Sunday forenoon came. It was bright and beautiful. This circumstance, and the announcement that the fat gentleman (who, for the past week, had been the marvel of the village) would preach, drew a full house. My father subsequently remarked that he never saw a larger attendance. The Rev. Mr. Mawkins looked impressive—his usual radiance and unctuousity were heightened by a new satin vest. As he rolled up the aisle, with my father, and took his seat in the pulpit, every eye followed him with admiration. It seemed no sin to worship such a model of meekness and mercy. My father offered a prayer and read a hymn and settled himself comfortably. The Rev. Mr. Mawkins rose and commenced his labors in a mild voice.

Could my father believe his senses? *The text was the same from which the Rev. Jonathan Stubbs had preached his most disastrous sermon.* The congregation stared. The Rev. Mr. M. repeated it, and this time more distinctly, and with a slight gesture. My father's agitation increased.

In fact, the Rev. Mr. M. had tackled the terrors systematically and in earnest. In the first place, he had culled out every word directly or indirectly pertaining to them, in Holy Writ. Then he had rummaged among the commentators and old divines, and got together a vast pile of speculative opinions, and a host of pithy phrases. Then he had built up a glowing hypothesis of his own, of which Stubbs' slow imagination never dreamed. And he had chopped up the whole into six divisions, each of which was more fervid and intense than the previous. His style rose through the gradations of warm, hot, scalding and boiling to explosive, at which pitch it remained. His voice made good time up to the fourth division, where it was overtaken by the subject. So the Rev. Mr. M. eked it out with gestures, of which he employed the most approved variety—such as

pointing, striking, jerking, waving, banging the Bible, and whacking the dust out of the pulpit cushions. Had it been practicable, I have no doubt the Rev. Mr. M. would have emphasized his "sixth and lastly" with a summerset. It was the proper climax. In short, the rejected Stubbs had exhibited fewer terrors in the four years of his ministry, than the Rev. Mr. Mawkins had crammed into this single discourse. Stubbs himself would have been frightened at it.

Alas, my poor father! He blushed and turned pale, and moved restlessly in his seat. Every point in the sermon was a dagger's point to him. He winced and dodged under the fire of those remorseless divisions. I conjectured at one time from a nervous motion of his foot, that he was sorely tempted to inflict condign punishment upon his reverend brother.

The members of the congregation soon grew impatient, and evinced their distaste by whispering, laughing, hiding of heads, and playing with hymn-books. Presently, one of the oldest and staunchest of the members quietly walked out. Another—a deacon—followed. Both had been active opponents of the Stubbs dynasty, and were both warm friends of my father. One by one others slipped away, until by the time the Rev. Mr. Mawkins had reached his goal, nearly one half of the audience—embracing almost all the substantial parishioners—had withdrawn. And at every withdrawal, the Rev. Mr. M., not to be lax on *his* part, however loosely he might be treated, gave an extra whack to the pulpit.

The result was—some malicious folks said that my father had only been expressing his own sentiments by proxy, and that he wished to avert indignation from *his* head to that of Mawkins'. This plausible tale gained ground, and threatened a schism, which my father prevented only with the greatest difficulty.

Early on Monday morning, the Mawkins family took up its line of march without hindrance. As the huge carriage went staggering down the road, my father uttered the resolution which I have recorded, and he ever after thought it hospitality enough to introduce such visitors to the landlord of the "Washington Tavern," where they could get good fare at a reasonable rate.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

BY GRACE NORMAN.

It was night! beautiful, bewitching night, when the stars shone in all their loveliness, seeming to the eye of imagination a host of angel watchers. Who has not felt in the calm, holy hour of midnight, a longing desire to pierce the veil that screens heaven from earth, and explore those regions where the foot of man never trod, and hold communion with the spirits of the loved who have crossed the Jordan of death, and are unseen guardians in our path, bearing on their wings peace and hope to the weary and disconsolate?

With such thoughts as these, while sitting at my casement, almost imperceptibly, as though lulled by unseen spirits, I fell into a sweet, refreshing slumber. But my mind was still active. I seemed, as it were, changed from a thing of earth, to a light, ethereal being, all life and motion. By an involuntary feeling, I began to ascend heights, and to pass clouds, until moon and stars were left in the distance. On, on, I soared, and at last reached a city of such surpassing loveliness, that language cannot describe it. Gates of pearl and costly stones were the entrances to this city, and on them were inscribed various devices. Trees of living verdure on whose boughs hung harps tuned by invisible hands, stood in the midst of the city. Flowers unscorched by the sun, bloomed in beauty and

freshness, visited by no rude blast, while over them passed a gentle breeze caused by the rustling of angel-wings. Though I felt that the spot whereon I stood was holy ground, yet I could see, as it were, but the suburbs of this great city. Others, like myself, of the earth, were standing at the entrance, and among others, one young and lovely. Time had, indeed, dealt gently with her, and her blooming cheeks and fair brow, told that sorrow had not taken up its abode in her heart. I perceived her looking anxiously toward the city, and her eye grew brighter as she saw a white-robed messenger approach; as he drew near, I could hear his salutation to the woman, "Hail! daughter of earth, the King of the city hath entrusted to my care, for thee, a gem of great price, it is pure and unsullied; but the casket which contains it, is of corruptible nature. Keep thou the gem in its original purity, the day will come when it will be required of thee again. The casket may decay by time, but the gem is imperishable. To enable you to perform your task, I have a talisman for you, which you are ever to bear about you, it is love."

I perceived that the woman anxiously advanced to receive her charge, when, to my astonishment, the angel reached forth a young child and a scroll, on which I read the words, "For of such

is the kingdom of heaven." With tears in her eyes the mother received her child, and hastened back to earth. I followed, for I longed to see how the command would be obeyed. Years seemed to pass as moments, and time sped on in his trackless flight and touched the brow of that young mother, but it passed unheeded. Her boy was the light of her existence, in his smiles she lived; and how could it be otherwise, for over her heart was the talisman by day and by night; love! a mother's love.

And yet, precious as the boy was to her, disease, in its most loathsome form, took possession of his frame. But no complaining word ever

passed the mother's lips. From morn till eve she watched and prayed. That prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will be done," was offered daily and hourly by the sorrowing mother. Lone and unheeded were her vigils kept, love was her only companion, and her heart needed none other. At last the white-robed messenger came to bear away the precious jewel. The casket, indeed, decayed, but the gem remained unsullied; and as it was borne away, I heard strains of celestial music, so glorious that my whole soul was entranced. The theme was love. But I awoke to find it, alas! a dream.

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD SONG.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

WITH a mocking, coquettish air, the sweetest, but most incorrigible little flirt that ever danced at a pic-nic, was singing.

"I care for nobody, nobody,
And nobody cares for me!"

She was sitting in a quiet, shady corner, near the side of a small stream, busily employed in weaving together some bright green leaves into a garland. Behind her stood a young gentleman in naval uniform, who silently and absently watched her slender fingers as they played at hide and seek among the leaves she was twining.

At a little distance, a gay and picturesque scene was visible from between the trees. A pic-nic party was there encamped for the day. A cloth was spread on the grass, about which some of the company were seated, partaking of the refreshments; others were scattered round in various groups; some walking—some swinging—some romping—some dancing—all gay and gaily dressed, and making up a cheerful picture.

Every now and then a merry rowing party on the creek passed before the young couple I have described, and their gay songs and laughter floated to the ear pleasantly over the water.

Little Sophy looking up into her companion's face with a saucy, challenging smile, sang again with her mocking voice, the verse of the old song,

"I care for nobody, nobody,
And nobody cares for me."

"What nonsense is that you are singing?" asked the youth, shaking off his reverie—"not a word of it true!"

"Half, at least," returned Sophy, with mischievous significance.

"Which half?" inquired Lieutenant Atherton, "the last?"

Sophy smiled disdainfully, but instead of replying, the little coquette threw the long spray of leaves which she had just finished braiding together, over her head. The bright, tender, green leaves mingled with her rich, fair curls, making them gleam like gold, and heightening, by contrast, the fresh, delicate colors of her youthful face. She was very lovely, and she shook her bright head with full consciousness of her powers of fascination, as she turned her eyes

on her companion with a glance of saucy malice, as much as to say—"Do you brave me?—then take the consequences!"

Atherton felt the full malice of that look.

"By heaven, Sophy, you know how to use those eyes of yours," he said, laughing; and then added with a sigh, as he gazed at her lovely, roguish face—

"No, Sophy, it is certainly not the *last* half of your song which is true."

A smile of triumph stole to Sophy's lips; she turned partly away, and sang half shyly, half saucily—

"I care for nobody, nobody,
Tho' somebody cares for me!"

"Sophy, Sophy, how can you be so cruel! A merciful cat would not play with a mouse, as you have trifled with my heart for this year and a half"—there was a tone of earnestness in the youth's voice at variance with his light words.

Sophy answered gaily—

"Because no mouse ever so tried to escape from mistress puss, as you have struggled to escape from me. Had you lain quiet under my paws, you would have seen how I should have patted you."

"No, Sophy," returned the youth, with sudden gravity, "it is because I have lain *too* quiet—been *too* submissive to your every whim, that you have come at last to despise as worthless, a heart so lightly won. Sophy, I should have left you a year ago, when I was ordered to India; but I was too weak—too much in love—I could not bear to leave you; I applied for change of orders, and have been lingering round you ever since. I have been rewarded for my foolishness as it deserved. I have not advanced in your favor one jot during all this time—"

"True," began Sophy, demurely, but her lover was too much in earnest to heed the interruption.

"Now, however," he continued, "I rejoice to say, that I have an opportunity of repairing my error. The former orders have been renewed—to-morrow I leave you—perhaps forever."

Sophy's cheek flushed suddenly—she attempted a jest, but the smile died on her lips, and tears rose to her eyes instead.

"Are you really going away?"—the voice of

the gay, little flirt was very doleful and tremulous, and her lover was beginning to gather a gleam of encouragement from her agitated manner, when poor Sophy, whether from her unconquered spirit of coquetry, or that she feared she was betraying a secret she had long sedulously guarded, added with a tone of mock distress,

"Who *shall* I find to flirt with while you are gone?"

Lieutenant Atherton was deeply grieved and disappointed by the light words. No wonder he was led to conclude, that the girl who could so jest at such a moment, was still mistress of her own heart; no wonder he said to himself—"Fool, you are answered—your suit is ended"—no wonder he commanded himself to think no more of one on whom his affections were wasted; and yet—who shall read a woman's heart?—all his conclusions, however logically drawn, were wrong: the foolish girl who so trifled with his feelings, dearly loved him all the time, and was at that very moment suffering far more than he was.

On the morrow the young lieutenant sailed for the East Indies; but though he met with many strange adventures there, and like all travellers in the East, rode on elephants and fought, or ran away from lions, I have forgotten which, I am by no means tempted to follow him on his travels, or to bore my reader by a narration of them. Neither shall I be so unmerciful as to inflict dull accounts of my moping heroine, whose spirits deserted her strangely about the time of Lieut. Atherton's departure. Let me rather hasten to the time of the return, when I shall have something less uninteresting to write about.

The way and manner of the meeting of the long parted lovers was this:

Our young lieutenant, having vainly sought, during all those years of absence, to banish the thoughts of a certain unworthy little flirt from his mind, had no sooner set his foot on shore, than he found himself full of torturing hopes and

fears on the way to her dwelling. With the right of an old familiar visitor he made his way to the drawing-room unannounced.

It was late in the afternoon—beginning to grow dark. Sophy was seated at the piano with her back to the door. Young Atherton stole softly behind her, and paused; what did it mean? she was crying—yes, really sobbing—and the cause so far as he could see, was a song to which she had just turned in an old music-book. Suddenly a man's hand and arm were stretched forward from over her shoulder, and the book seized and carried off.

Sophy screamed, and started from her seat—and then stood silent, and trembling violently, before her lover, gazing at him as though he were an apparition.

Young Atherton's eyes meanwhile turned from the old song to seek Sophy's face.

Without a word of greeting—"Sophy," he said, laying his hand on the open book—"does this old ballad still tell a true story?"

"As true, as it ever did," faltered Sophy, blushing and turning away her face—"Oh! Edward, must your foolish Sophy say more?"

The darkness gathered round the happy reunited lovers as they sat talking together. Ah, how much there was to say. What tender chidings—what sweet confessions—what reminiscences of the past—what hopes for the future. Fortunately no visitors came to interrupt their converse, and it extended far into the night. Yet when Atherton left her late in the evening, Sophy still lingered at her piano, perhaps recalling all the tender and fond words which had been whispered to her that happy night, and ere closing the instrument, she lightly touched a few soft chords, and sang in a low, frightened voice, which trembled with irrepressible joy, a new version of the old song—it was this—

"I care for somebody, somebody,
And somebody cares for me!"

THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

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CHAPTER II.

WHEN after a while, the judge found that Mrs. Farnham was still talking at the children, and dealing him a sharp sentence or two over their shoulders, for preferring the scenery to her conversation, he quietly drew in his head, and gathering up a quantity of the flowers, arranged a pretty bouquet for each of the children, who received them with shy satisfaction. Then with more effort at arrangement, he completed a third bouquet, and laid it on Mrs. Farnham's lap with affected diffidence, that went directly to that very weak portion of the lady's system, which she dignified with the name of heart. Enoch Sharp smiled at the effect of his adroit attention, while the lady, appeased into a state of gentle self-complacency, rewarded him with beaming smiles and a fresh avalanche of those soft, frothy words which she solemnly believed were conversation. From time to time she refreshed herself with the perfume of his mountain flowers, descanted on their beauties with sentimental warmth, and murmuring snatches of poetry over them, very soft, very sentimental, and particularly annoying to a man filled in all the depths of his soul with an honest love of nature.

But quite unconscious that she was not rendering herself peculiarly attractive, the lady murmured out her poetic nonsense, and cast her pale blue eyes over the blossoms to their giver, after a fashion that had proved very effective with the late lamented Mr. Farnham, but which ended in forcing Enoch Sharp to lean out of the window again, for the smiles about his lips were getting too rebellious for anything but concealment. But every time Judge Sharp betook himself to an examination of the scenery, Mrs. Farnham took a sly revenge on the little girls, forcing them to sit upright, scolding them when they drew close together, and bemoaning the crushed feathers with pathetic anger.

Thus half amused and half angry, the judge made fresh efforts at conciliation, that the poor orphans might be saved, a better proof of his noble heart than many a greater act had been.

They were now descending the mountain passes. Broken hills and lovely green vallies rose and sunk along their rapid progress. Never on earth was scenery more varied and lovely. Little emerald hollows shaded with hemlock, and overhanging brooklets that came stealing like broken threads of diamonds down the mountain sides to hide beneath their shadows, were constantly appearing and disappearing along the road. It was impossible for little Mary to sit still when these heavenly glimpses presented themselves. Her cheeks burned; her eyes kindled; her very limbs trembled with suppressed impatience: but she dared not lean forward, and could only obtain tantalizing glances of the sparkling brooks, and the soft, green mosses that clung around the mountain cliffs where they shot over the road.

The carriage passed through several villages winding in and out through the mountain passes, through hills so interlapped, that it seemed impossible to guess how the carriage would extricate itself from the green labyrinth.

Nothing could be more delicate and vivid than the foliage that clothed the hill sides, for the primeval growth of hemlocks had been cut away from the hills, and a second crop of luxuriant young trees, beech, oak and maple, mottled with rich clusters of mountain ash, and the deep green of white pines covered the whole country.

All at once Ralph drew up his horses on a curve of the highway. The carriage was completely buried in a valley along which wound a river, whose sweet noise they had long heard among the trees.

"Now, children, look out," said the judge, laughing pleasantly, "look out and tell me how Ralph is to get through the hills."

Both the little girls sprang forward and looked abroad breathlessly, like two birds at the open door of a cage in which they had been imprisoned. The judge watched them with smiling satisfaction as they cast puzzled glances from side to side, meeting nothing but shoulders, and angles, and ridges of the mountains heaving over each other in huge green waves that seemed to be endless,

and to crowd close to each other, though many a lovely valley lay between, little dreamed of by the wondering children.

"Well, then, tell me how you expect to get out, little ones?" repeated the judge.

"Sure enough, how?" repeated Isabel, drawing back, and looking from the judge to Mrs. Farnham.

But Mary was still gazing abroad. Her eyes wandered from hill to hill, and grew more and more luminous as each new beauty broke upon her. At last she drew back with a deep breath, and the loveliest of human smiles upon her face.

"Indeed, sir, indeed I shouldn't care if we never did get out, the river would be company enough."

"Yes, company enough," replied the judge, smiling. "But would it feed us when we are hungry?"

"It don't seem as if I ever should be hungry here," replied the child.

"But I am hungry now," replied Enoch Sharp; "and so is Mrs. Farnham, I dare say!"

"No," replied that lady, who prided herself on a delicate appetite, "I never am hungry; dew and flowers, Mr. Farnham used to say, were intended to support sensitive nerves like mine!"

"Very likely," thought Enoch Sharp, "I am certain no human being could support them," but he drowned this ungallant thought in a loud call for Ralph to drive on.

The horses made a leap forward, swept round a huge rock that concealed the highway where it curved suddenly with a bend of the river, and before them lay one of the most beautiful mountain villages you ever beheld. The horses knew their old home. Ralph had no reason for urging them forward now. Away they went sweeping up the broad winding sheet between double columns of young maple trees, through which the white houses gleamed tranquilly and dream-like on the eyes of those city children.

CHAPTER III.

JUDGE SHARP'S carriage stopped in front of a noble mansion near the centre of the village. I think it must have been one of the oldest houses in the place. But modern improvements had so transfigured and beautified it, that it bore the aspect of a noble suburban villa rather than a remote mountain residence. The roof lifted in a pointed gable, and supported by brackets, shot several feet over the front, resting on a row of tall, slender columns which formed a noble portico along the entire front.

With a desire to leave the first family homestead

ever built in those mountains entire in its simple architecture, this portico shaded the double row of windows first introduced into the dwelling; and the main building remained entire within and without as it had been left years before by its primitive architect. But modern wings had been united to the old building on the left; and in the rear wings pointed with gables, and so interspersed with chimnies that the whole mass formed a gothic exterior singular and beautiful as it was picturesque. Noble old trees, maple, elm and ash, shaded the green lawn which fell far back from the house, terminating on one side in a fine fruit orchard bending with ripened peaches and purple plums, and broken up on the south by a flower garden gorgeous with late summer blossoms, shaded with grape arbors and clumps of mountain ash, all flushed and red with berries. This noble garden lost itself in the deep green of an apple orchard full of singing birds. The waters of a mountain brook, and sounds of its merry voices as it came leaping down from the broken hills beyond, gleamed and rose through the thick foliage, mingling a sweet, perpetual chime with the rising breath of that little wilderness of flowers.

This was the dwelling at which Judge Sharp's carriage stopped. It seemed like an Eden to the little girls, who longed to get out and enjoy a full view of its beauties from the lawn. But Mrs. Farnham was a guest, for the time; and well disposed to use her privileges, she refused to descend, though hospitably pressed, and seemed to think the few moments required by the judge to enter his own home, an encroachment on her rights and privileges. But the judge cared little for this, and was far more engaged with a venerable old house dog, toothless, grey and dim-eyed, who arose from his sunny nook upon the grass, and came soberly down to welcome his master, than he was with the lady's discontent.

"Ha, Carlo, always on hand, old fellow," he said, patting the gizzly head of his old favorite, "glad to see ma, ha!"

Carlo looked up through his dim eyes and gave a feeble whine, which in his young days would have been a deep-mouthed bay of welcome. Then with grave dignity, he tottered onward by his master's side, escorting him up to the entrance door, and lay down in a sunny spot which broke through the honeysuckle branches on the balcony, satisfied by the soft rush of feet and the glad female voices within, that his escort was no longer required.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Farnham, leaning back with an air of ineffable disgust, and talking to no one in particular—"I wonder how the judge

can allow that old brute to prowl after him in that manner. I'm sure if he were at my house I would have him shot before morning—laying down on the portico indeed."

"But he seems so glad and so still," said Mary Fuller, struck with a thrill of sympathy for the dog, rendered repulsive to that silly woman by his age, as she was by deformity.

"Isn't it the duty of every hideous thing to be still?" replied Mrs. Farnham, casting a look of feeble spite at the child. "It seems the judge has a fancy for uncouth pets."

"Perhaps because they feel kindness so much," answered Mary, in a trembling voice.

"Indeed," drawled the lady, "then I wish he would be kind enough to send us on. This tiresome waiting when one is worn out and half famished, is too much."

Just then the judge appeared at the front door cheerful and smiling; and in the shaded background of the hall two fair forms were visible hovering near, as if reluctant to part with him again so soon.

"Not quite out of patience, I hope," he said, leaning into the carriage, while the ladies of his family came forth with offers of hospitality. But Mrs. Farnham muttered something about fatigue, dust, and the strong desire she had of seeing her own home—a desire in which the ladies soon heartily, but silently joined, for it needed only a first sentence to convince them that the interesting widow would make but a sorry acquisition to the neighborhood.

"Then if you absolutely insist not to get out, madam, the next best thing is to proceed," cried Enoch Sharp, and, springing into his seat, he waved an adieu to his family; and the rather reluctant horses proceeded briskly down the street.

The river which we have mentioned skirted the village with its bright waters; two or three fine manufacturing buildings stood back from its banks: and having supplied them with its sparkling strength, the river swept on wildly as before, curving and deepening between its grim or rocky banks with low, pleasant murmurs, like a troop of children let loose from school.

The highway ran along its banks, sometimes divided from the waters by clumps of hoary old hemlocks, that had escaped the axe from their isolation perhaps; and again separated only by thickets of wild blackberries and mountain shrubs.

As they proceeded the hills crowded down close to the highway, and that ran along the steep banks of the river, which rushed on with fresh impetuosity, and gathering up its waves in a sudden curve of the channel, leaped down the valley

in one of the most beautiful waterfalls you ever saw.

"Oh, one minute; do, do stop one minute," cried little Mary, as the broad crescent of the fall flashed before her. "Isabel, Isabel, did you ever see anything like that?"

"Really, judge, your pet is very forward, and so tiresome," said Mrs. Farnham, gazing down upon the waters with a weak sneer; "one would think she had never seen a mill-dam before."

This sent the poor child back to her corner again. But Mrs. Farnham had struck the judge on a sensitive point when she sneered at that beautiful crescent-shaped fall rolling in a sheet of crystal over its native rock, the sparkling waters all in sunshine; the still basin beneath green with stilly shadows cast over it from masses of tall trees that crowded around the fall.

"Madam," he said, "that mill-dam found its channel when the hills around had their first foundation. At any rate, you cannot find fault with the workmanship, for God himself made it."

"Indeed, you surprise me," cried the lady, taking out her glass and leaning forward, "I really supposed it must be the result of some of those lagging bees that we hear of in these back settlements. I quite long to witness something of the kind; it must be pleasant, judge, to see your peasantry enjoy themselves on these rustic occasions."

"My peasantry," laughed the judge, as much ashamed of the angry feelings with which his last speech had been given, as if he had been caught whipping a lap dog—"my constituents, you mean."

"Oh, yes, of course, I mean anything that you call that sort of people—constituents is it."

"My wife and I call that sort of people neighbors."

"Indeed," cried Mrs. Farnham, dropping her glass and leaning back as one who bends beneath a sudden blow, "I thought you were to be *my* neighbors."

"If you will permit us," said the judge, laughing; "but here is your house, and there stands the housekeeper ready to receive you."

Mrs. Farnham brightened, and began to gather up her shawl and embroidered satchel, like one who was becoming weary of her companions.

"This is really very nice," she said, looking up to the huge square building lifted from the road by half a dozen terraces, and crowned with a tall cupola; "depend on it I shall make it quite a Paradise, judge. I'm glad it's out of sight of your mill—your waterfall—I hate sounds that never stop."

"How she must hate her own pattering voice,"

thought the judge, as he helped the lady in her descent from the carriage.

"And the housekeeper, I thought she was here."

"And so I am, ma'am," answered a slight, little woman, with a freckled complexion, and immense quantities of red hair gathered back of her head in the fangs of a huge comb that had been fashionable twenty-five years before, "been a waiting at that identical front door full unto an hour, expecting you every minet: but better late than never. You're welcome as scraps to a beggar's basket."

It was laughable—the look of indignant astonishment with which the widow regarded her housekeeper, as in the simple honesty of her heart she uttered this welcome.

"And pray, who engaged you to take charge here? Could no more suitable person be found?"

"Who engaged me, marm, me? why I grew up here—never was engaged in my hull life but once, and then I come right straight to the mark and married the feller off-hand."

"But how came you here as my housekeeper?"

"Well, sort of nat'rally, marm, as children take the measels; bein as I was in the house, I just let 'em call me what they're a mind to; haint quite got used to the name yet, but I'll soon fit on with practice. Come, now, walk in and make yourself to home."

All the time Mrs. Farnham had been standing by the carriage, with her shawl and travelling satchel on one arm. She refused to surrender them to Enoch Sharp, and stood swelling with indignation because the housekeeper did not offer to relieve her. She might as well have expected the cupola to descend from its roof, as any of these menial attentions from Mrs. Salina Bowles, who possessed very original ideas of her duties as a housekeeper.

"Gracious me, I hadn't the least notion that you had children along!" cried the good woman, totally oblivious of Mrs. Farnham's flushed face, pressing close up to the carriage.

"But allow me to hope that you will grant permission now that they have come!" said the widow, with an attempt at biting satire, which Salina received in solemn good faith.

"It ain't the custum hereabouts to turn any thing out of doors, marm, expected or not; and I calcurlate there'll be room in the house for a young un or two if they ain't over noisy. Come, little gal, give a jump, and let's see how spry you are."

Isabel obeyed, and impelled by Mrs. Bowles' vigorous arm, made a swinging leap out of the carriage.

"Gracious sakes, but she's as hornsosome as a pictur, ain't she though? Not your own darter, marm, I calcurlate."

The flush deepened on the widow's face, and she began to bite her nether lip furiously, a sure sign that rage was approaching to white heat with her.

"Come, child, move on, let us get into the house, if this woman will move out of the way and permit us——"

"Out of the way, goodness knows I ain't in it by a long chance," cried Salina, waving her hand toward the house; "as for permitting, why the path is open straight to the front door: and the house just as much yours as it is mine, I reckon."

"Is it indeed?" sneered the lady, lifting a fold of her travelling skirt, as she prepared to ascend the first terrace, "we shall decide that to-morrow."

But Mrs. Bowles sent an admiring glance, often directed at the beautiful child rather than the lady.

"Well, now, she is a purty critter, ain't she, judge? them long curls do beat all."

But the judge was by Mrs. Farnham's side assisting her to mount the terrace, when Salina became aware that her glance fell inside the carriage again, and she saw Mary Fuller leaning forward and gazing after Isabel with her eyes full of tears. Instantly a change came over the rough manner of the woman—she remembered her encomiums on Isabel's beauty with a quick sense of shame, and leaning forward reached out both hands.

"Come, little gal, let me lift you out, hornsosome is as hornsosome does, you know. I hope you ain't tired, nor nothing."

Mary began to weep outright. She tried to smile and force the tears back with her eyelids; but the woman's kind words had unlocked her little grateful heart, and she could only sob out,

"Thank you—thank you very much; but I'm not to stop here, it's only Isabel."

"And is she your sister?"

"No; but we've been together so long, and now she's gone; and—and——"

"Gone without speaking a word, or saying good-buy, or—well, I never did!"

And away darted Mrs. Bowles up the terraces, leaping from step to step like an old grey-hound till she seized on Isabel, and giving her a light shake, bore her back in triumph, much to the terror of both children and the astonishment of the widow, who stood regarding them from the upper terrace in impatient wrath; while the judge softly rubbed his hands and wondered what would come next.

"There, now, just act like a Christian, and say good-buy to the little gal that's left behind," cried Mrs. Bowles, hissing out a long breath as she plumped little Isabel down into the carriage. "Mary Fuller, what's the use of long curls and fine feathers if there's no feeling under them? There, there, have a good-buy and a genuine long cry together, it'll be refreshing."

Without another word the housekeeper marched away and ascended the terraces. Her freckled face glowing with rude kindness, and the sunbeams glancing around her red hair as we see it around some of the ugly old saints, that the old masters stiffened on canvass before Raphael gave ease of movement and freedom of drapery to religious subjects.

"What have you done with the child?" almost shrieked Mrs. Farnham, as the housekeeper drew near with a broad smile on her broader mouth.

"Just put her in her place, that's all," replied Salina; "she was a coming off without bidding t'other little thing good-buy. There she sot with her two eyes as wet as Periwinkles, looking—looking arter you all so wishful. I couldn't stand it: nobody about these parts could. We ain't wolves and bears if we were brought up under the hemlocks. 'Little children should love one another,' that's genuine Scripiter, or ought to be if it ain't."

"What on earth shall I do with this creature?" cried Mrs. Farnham, half overpowered by the higher and stronger character with which she had to deal. "She half frightens me!"

"Still she seems to me about right in her ideas, if a little rough in her way of enforcing them. Believe me, madam, Salina Bowles will prove a faithful and true friend."

"Friend! Mr. Sharp, I do not hire my friends!"

The judge made a slightly impatient movement. He was becoming weary of wasting ideas on the well-dressed shell of humanity before him.

"You will find the prospect very delightful," he said, casting a glance toward the mountains, at whose feet the river wound brightening in the sunshine, and seeming deeper where the shadows lengthened over it from the hills. "See, the spires and cupolaes are just visible at the left; though not close together, we shall be near enough for good neighbors."

The lady looked discontentedly around on the hills, covered with the golden sunset, the river sleeping beneath them, and the distant village rising from masses of foliage, and pencilling its spires against the blue sky, where it fell down in soft, wreathing clouds at the mouth of the valley.

"I dare say it is what you call fine scenery, and all that; but really I cannot see what tempted

Mr. Farnham to think of forbidding the sale of this place; and, above all, to make it a condition in his will that I should live here while Julian is on his travels."

"Your husband started life here, madam," answered the judge, almost sternly; "and we love the places where our first struggles were made."

"Yes, but then I didn't start life here with him, you know. Poor, dear Mr. Farnham was so much older, and his tastes so different, I sometimes wonder how he managed to win me, so young, so—so—but you comprehend, judge!"

"He had managed to get a handsome property together before that, I believe," said the judge, with a demure smile.

"But what is property without taste, and a just idea of style? Mr. Farnham became quite aware of his deficiency in these points when he married me."

"There does seem to have been a deficiency then," muttered the judge, and having appeased himself with this bit of internal malice, he turned an attentive ear to the end of her speech.

"His first wife, you know, was a commonish sort of person."

Here Salina, who stood upon the broad doorstep with the front entrance open, strode down and confronted Mrs. Farnham. She remained thus with those little grey eyes searching the lady's face, and with her long, bony hand lightly clenched, as if she waited for something else before her wrath would be permitted to reach the fighting point. But Mrs. Farnham remained silent, only muttering over "a very commonish sort of person indeed;" and with hound-like reluctance, Salina retreated backward step by step to her position to the door.

CHAPTER IV.

MEANTIME Mary Fuller and Isabel had remained in the carriage, locked in each other's arms, and murmuring out their fondness, their grief, and promises of faithful remembrance amid broken sobs and tears, such as they had never shed before even in their first poverty-stricken orphanage.

Something of that deep, unconscious spirit of prophecy, which sometimes haunts the souls of children God-gifted like Mary Fuller, whispered her that this separation would be forever in spirit, if not in person. She had reasoned with this presentiment all the way from the Alms-House, which had so lately been their home, to this the place of their future residence. In the innocence of her heart she had taxed this feeling

as a selfish one, and had heaped herself with self-reproach, as having fallen into envy of the brighter destiny which awaited Isabel, in comparison with her own prospects. But the child had done herself injustice, and mistook the holiest intuition of a pure heart for a feeling of which that heart was incapable.

Isabel merely knew that they were to be parted, that the young creature whose care had been that of a mother, whose patience and gentle love had given a home feeling even to the Alms-House, would no longer share her room, curl her hair, arrange her dress with the devotion of a slave, or in any way soothe her life as she had done. She did not comprehend, as many did, the great evil which this separation would bring upon her moral nature; but her affectionate heart was touched, and the passionate grief, that she felt at parting, was more violent by far than the deeper and more solemn feeling that shook Mary's heart to the centre, but made no violent outcry, as lighter grief might have done. Both Salina and Mary herself had done the child injustice, when they supposed her going heartlessly away from her old companion. Confused by the meeting of Mrs. Farnham and the housekeeper, and puzzled by the strangeness of every thing around, she had followed her benefactress, or adopted mother, without a thought that Mary would not join them; and her grief was violent indeed, when she learned that then and there she must separate from the only creature on earth, that her warm young heart could entirely love.

The children were locked in each other's arms, both weeping, each striving to comfort the other.

"Remember now, Isabel, say your prayers every night, the Lord's prayer, and after that, Isabel, remember and ask God to bless me and make me, oh! so patient."

"Ah! but it will seem so lonesome all by myself, with no one to kneel by me. Mary, Mary, I wish they had left us together at the hospital, I long to get away from here."

"No, you mustn't feel that way, Mary, because Mrs. Farnham is very good, and very kind, to make you like her own child, and dress you up in all these pretty things."

"They are pretty!" replied Mary, examining her plaid silk dress through many tears, "but somehow I don't seem to feel a bit happier in them."

"But this lady is to be your mother, Isabel."

Poor Isabel burst into a fresh passion of grief. "Oh! Mary, Mary, that is it. You know she isn't in the least like what my mother was, my own darling, darling mother."

"But she is in heaven," said Mary, in her sweet, deep voice, that always seemed so holy and true. "Now, dear Isabel, you will have two mothers, one here, another beyond the stars. That mother—oh, Isabel, I believe it as I do my own life—that mother comes to you always when you pray."

"Oh! then I will pray so often, Mary," cried the little girl, clasping her hands, "if that will bring her close to me."

Mary looked long and wistfully into that lovely face, with only such admiration as one bereft of all personal attractions can feel for beauty. Isabel clung closer to her, and wept more quietly.

"You will come and see me very often," she whispered.

"Yes," sobbed Mary, "if they will let me."

"Where are they going to leave you?"

"I don't know, I haven't thought to ask till now."

"I hope it will be near, Mary; and then, you know, we will see each other every day," cried the child, brightening through her tears.

"But I am afraid Mrs. Farnham don't like me well enough. She may not allow it," answered Mary, with a meek smile.

"But I will," persisted Isabel, flinging back her head, with an air that brought fresh tears into Mary's eyes.

"Isabel," she said, gravely, and striving to suppress her grief, "don't—don't—Mrs. Farnham is your mother now."

"No, she isn't though. She frightens me to death with her kindness. She don't love me a bit, only because my face is so pretty. I wish it wasn't, and then perhaps I could go with you."

"No, no, we needn't expect that. I never did. It's only a wonder they took me at all. I'm quite sure if it hadn't been for Mr. Sharp, I should have been left in the Poor-House all alone. The lady only looked at you from the first."

"I know it, don't you think I heard all she said about my eyes, my curls, and my beautiful face, while you stood there with your mouth all of a tremble, and your eyes growing so large and bright under their tears—I knew that it was my pretty face, that was doing it all; and oh! just then, Mary, I hated it so much."

"It is a great thing to have a beautiful face, Isabel, a very great thing. You don't know what it is to see kind people turn away their eyes for fear of hurting your feelings by a look; and to hear rude, bad persons jibeing at you. Isabel, dear, you wouldn't like that."

Mary said this in her usual sad, meek way,

smiling so patiently as if every word were a tear wrung from her heart.

"Oh! Mary, but you are beautiful to me—nobody on earth looks so sweet and good in my eyes, or ever will."

The two children embraced each other, and both wept freely as only children can weep. At length Mary Fuller withdrew herself from Isabel's arms, lingering a moment to press fresh kisses among her curls.

"Now, Isabel, you must go. See, they are looking at us. Mrs. Farnham will be angry."

"Mary, I want to tell you something, I like the red haired woman, cross as she is, a thousand times better than Mrs. Farnham. If she did shake me, it was for my good, I dare say."

"She was kind, at any rate, to let you come back," said Mary.

"To let me? Why, Mary, she shook me up as mamma would a pillow, and shot me into the carriage so swift, it took my breath."

Mary smiled faintly, and Isabel began to laugh through her tears, as she scrambled out of the carriage again. Mary followed her with longing eyes. Something of maternal tenderness mingled with her love of that beautiful child; suffering had rendered her strangely precocious; and that prophetic spirit, which is inseparable from genius, filled her whole being as with the love of a guardian angel.

"Oh, how lovely she is, how bright, how like a bird—if her father could only see her now, poor, poor Isabel. It is so hard for her to be with strange people; but I, I, who never had a home since my father died, I who was so long prowling the streets like a little wild beast that everybody ran away from. Yes, I ought to be so content and so grateful. But—but I should like it so much if they would only let me come and see her once in a while. It's so hard, and so lonesome without that."

Thus muttering sadly and sweetly to herself, the child sat with her little face buried in both hands, almost disconsolate.

She was aroused by a vigorous footstep and the cheering voice of Enoch Sharp. He did not appear to notice her tears, but took his seat, waving his hand to the group just turning to enter Mrs. Farnham's dwelling.

"There, there, wave your hand, little one. They're looking this way."

Mary leaned forward. Mrs. Farnham and the housekeeper had entered the hall; but Isabel had taken off her Leghorn flat and was waving it toward them. The pink ribbons and marabouts fluttered joyously in the air. Mary could not see that those bright hazle eyes were dim with

tears, but the position and free wave of the arms were full of buoyant joy. She drew a deep breath, and choked back her tears. It seemed as if she were utterly deserted, then utterly deformed. While she could feel and admire Isabel's beauty, her own lack of it had only been half felt: now her sun was gone, and she, poor moon, grew dreary in his unaided darkness. Up to this time Mary had hardly given a thought to the fate intended for herself. Always meek and lowly in her desires, the feeling that any place was good enough for her, kept away all selfish anxiety on her own account. Nor did she inquire now. Her only question was while Enoch Sharp was striving to comfort her by caressing little cares.

"Is it far from here that you are taking me now?"

"No, child, it is not more than a mile, you can run over and see her any time before breakfast, if you like."

Mary did not answer, but her eyes began to sparkle, and bending her head softly down, as a meek child does in prayer, she covered Enoch Sharp's hands with soft, timid kisses, that went to the very core of his noble heart.

"Would you like to know how, and what your home is to be, little one?" he said, smoothing her hair with one disengaged hand.

"If you please, but I am sure it will be very nice, so near her."

"Do you wish very much to be with her?"

"Indeed I do, and if they could send us word from heaven, I know her father and mother would say it was best."

"You knew her parents then? I thought there was no relationship between you."

"Relationship, sir," answered the child, with the most touching smile that ever lighted human face, "oh, sir, haven't you seen how lovely she is? And I——"

The child paused and spread her little hands open, as much as to say, "and I! see how crooked and wan I am, *could* two creatures so opposite be of the same blood?"

"I think you more lovely by half than she is, my child," cried Enoch Sharp, drawing the hand, still warm with her grateful kisses across his eyes, "good children are never ugly, you know."

The child looked at him wonderingly.

"You have seen a thunder-cloud," he said, answering the look, "how leaden and dismal it is of itself—but let the sunshine strike it and its leaden edges are fringed with rosy gold, its masses turn purple and warm crimson, it trembles apart and rainbows leap from its bosom, bridging the sky with light; do you understand me, child?"

"Oh! yes, sir, I have seen the clouds melt away into rainbows so often."

"Well, it is the sunshine that makes a thing of beauty, where was only a dull black cloud. In the human face, my child, goodness acts like sunshine on the clouds. Be very good, little one, and the best portion of mankind will always think you handsome."

Mary listened very earnestly, but with an irresolute and unconvinced expression. This doctrine of immaterial loveliness she could not readily adopt; and, strange enough, did not quite relish. Her admiration of Isabel's beauty was so intense, that words like these seemed to outrage it.

"But, if you and Mrs. Farnham's little girl are not related, how came it that you cry so bitterly at being parted?" said Enoch Sharp.

"Sir," said the child, turning her large spiritual eyes upon the judge, "her father and mother were very, very kind to me, when I had no home, no food—nothing—nothing on earth but the cold streets to live in."

"And how came you in that terrible condition, poor child? Where your parents dead?"

"My father was!"

"But your mother?"

The child paused, looked at him searchingly, and grew pale as death.

"I will tell you the truth, sir. My mother—no, no, don't make me tell you about her!"

"It is important that I should be well informed about you, Mary. If your mother is alive, I must know all about her."

"She was alive, when I was at the hospital: but oh! sir——"

She broke off, and her downcast eyelids were crowded full of tears.

"Well, child?"

"My mother drinks!"

The words dropped like lead from her trembling lips, and over her face the crimson shame came rushing in torrents.

"And your father also?" inquired Enoch Sharp, softly, folding her hand in his.

"My father," cried the child, starting upright, and her eyes flashed out brightly, scattering back their tears, "my father was as good a man as ever breathed, good, good, sir, as you are. He did everything for me, worked for me, taught me himself, nursed me in his own arms, my father—oh, my poor, poor father, he is a bright angel in heaven."

"But your mother—did she never act kindly by you?"

The child shook her head very mournfully, and whispered under her breath,

"She made me what I am!"

Enoch Sharp turned pale, almost, as the shrinking child.

"My father was a mechanic, that was what he called himself—he went to his work one day and left me alone with my mother. I was a little thing, just learning to walk. He came home. She was in a heavy sleep at the foot of the stairs, and I lay in a heap by her side, moaning dreadfully. After that I grew into this shape."

"And your father, poor man?"

"It killed him, sir. He was a long, long time in dying, but at last he left me alone with *her*."

The strong arm of Enoch Sharp stole around the child. There was a slight tremor in it.

"And then?" questioned the good man.

"Then things went worse and worse. We never had the same home a week together. Sometimes it was in a garret, sometimes in the basement, and every time we moved our furniture dropped away, till nothing was left. *She* grew worse and worse. One night she brought some strange people home with her, they were noisy, quarreled, I don't know just how, for I was crouching in a corner; but the door was forced, and the room cleared. I followed two men who led my mother away, crying and begging to go with her. They sent me back. It was terribly cold. I stayed all night, all day, another night, and then, almost frozen, and so dreadfully hungry, I crept into the street. Isabel's father was a policeman. He saw me, took me home, fed me. Oh! sir, how good they all were!"

"But how came his child in the Alms-House with you?"

"The Mayor got angry with Mr. Chester and turned him out of the police. He was not well. It made him worse. One night he was brought home dead, his wife—oh! I wish you could have seen her—was ill of a fever. Anxiety drove her wild, she would go search for him, and fell in the street. They took her to the Alms-House hospital. We searched and searched, and at last found her there. It was only three days, and she died. We were left in the Alms-House together. There was nobody to ask after us till you came with the lady."

"Thank God! we did come."

"Oh! we *did* thank God," said the child, eagerly. "Both Isabel and I remembered that it was like talking to the only friend we had."

"That is a good girl. But here we are at your new home. Wipe up your tears and look cheerful."

Mary obeyed, and her effort to smile was a pleasant tribute to her noble friend, as he lifted her tenderly from the carriage.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MY EXPERIENCE IN AUCTIONS.

BY FANNY SMITH.

"A HUNDRED and twenty-five, and twenty, makes a hundred and forty-five, and five, a hundred and fifty," and with a sigh I rolled up my bank notes and replaced them in my purse. "Dear me, I ought to have five hundred, to get one half the things I want. I wish it was twice as much, at least."

"Wish what was twice as much?" asked my energetic little friend, Mrs. Roberts, putting her head into the sitting-room door.

"Why this sum of money," was my reply, holding up my purse, "you know papa allowed me a thousand dollars for new furniture, &c., when we moved, and said that was absolutely every cent he could afford after building; and what with velvet carpets, and lace curtains, and brocatelle, I have absolutely not got one half that I really need with my money. Oh, dear! I wish I had the cap of Fortunatus."

"My head on top of yours will make a splendid cap," replied Charlotte, laughing, "and I have come, like the good fairy that I am, just in the nick of time to help you out of your dilemma. I am on my way now down to Watson's auction rooms to look at the fancy articles, &c., which are open for inspection to-day, and will be sold to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. You can get anything you want there for absolutely almost nothing."

Now I had the most unshaken faith in Charlotte's capacity for obtaining bargains. She paid but fourteen cents for sirloin beef, when every one else groaned over each mouthful they ate at the rate of sixteen cents the pound; and the cashmere which cost me a dollar and twenty-five cents, she got for a dollar and a shilling; her embroideries and laces were handsomer than mine, for which I paid twice as much; and her nice little house was furnished elegantly from top to bottom on less money than was put into Mrs. Lyon's tawdry drawing-rooms. No wonder that I looked upon Charlotte Roberts just then, as I suppose Cinderilla did on her fairy god-mother, when she sent the girl from the chimney corner to a ball, dressed like a princess, in a carriage made out of a pumpkin.

"Will it be exactly proper for two ladies to come to auction alone and bid?" whispered I, as we entered the vast saloon; but in a moment the

idea of any impropriety vanished, for walking about examining the articles were a hundred ladies perhaps, with but a small sprinkling of black coats and hats.

"Take your catalogue and mark what you want, and if you are afraid to bid to-morrow, I will do it for you," said Charlotte, as we walked around the room.

Mark what I wanted! Why an insane desire to possess nearly everything I saw, seized me. Parian statuettes, Bohemian glass vases, ormolu clocks, marble card receivers, china, cut-glass, fancy chairs, papier mache tea-pots, &c. &c., all in their turn, seemed to me to be the most desirable things there. Mrs. Roberts peeped over my shoulder, as, with pencil in hand, I gave a long mark opposite each article I deemed absolutely indispensable.

"You innocent child," exclaimed she, as I thought somewhat contemptuously, "why you have hit upon the most expensive things in the catalogue, and three hundred dollars wouldn't buy all those. Where are your necessities?"

My list was, by my friend's advice, considerably reduced, and I at length tore myself away from the show-rooms, having promised Charlotte to call for her early the next morning. I was in a state of indescribable excitement all the evening, tossed on my pillow till nearly one o'clock, arranging, in imagination, my purchases in their proper places, and was awake the next morning quite an hour earlier than usual.

"Whew! what's astir now, Fanny?" asked my father, as he met me on the staircase, duster and brush in hand; but I kept my own counsel, merely saying I had an engagement early that morning, and was obliged to attend to my household duties before breakfast.

With eager steps I hastened to Mrs. Roberts'. Every moment seemed an hour, till the servant opened the door; and when I took out my watch in the hall, I found I was at least twenty minutes before the time.

"Fanny, come up in the nursery," called Charlotte, from the head of the staircase. With a feeling of annoyance that she was not ready, I obeyed, and to my horror I found she was not going.

"It is absolutely impossible to think of it,"

said she; "baby was sick all night, and I can't think of leaving him, the pet," and the mother commenced devouring with kisses the "little angel," as she called what I really thought the most disagreeable baby in Christendom.

My persuasions were in vain. Charlotte was a devoted mother, and she seemed to care so much for baby, and so little for my terrible disappointment, that I was ready to cry with vexation.

"I can never bid for those things in the world," said I, half chokingly, "so I might as well go home again; I had depended so entirely on your bidding for me, as you have been to auction before."

"Depend upon it, Fan, you won't mind it one bit when you get there," replied Charlotte. "Your excitement will make you forget there is another person in the room; and if you can catch the auctioneer's eye, and only nod your head, he will understand that you are willing to give more than those bidding against you, and then you won't have to speak."

I concluded to take my friend's advice. The idea of making a hundred and fifty dollars go as far as three hundred, was irresistible; so bidding Charlotte good morning, in a somewhat better humor, I went down to the auction room. The sale was just commencing as I entered. The auctioneer was perched on a chair, and two of his assistants were holding up a pair of large Bardonia marble vases. "Gentlemen and ladies," said he, "I assure you that those vases are the finest of the kind ever brought to this country: they are worth at least one hundred and fifty dollars. What will you give? a hundred and twenty-five? a hundred? ninety? eighty?" &c. &c., running down the scale of prices, till some one in the crowd bid twenty dollars. "Twenty dollars bid, gentlemen," said the auctioneer. I was shocked at the temerity of a man who would bid only twenty dollars for articles which were worth a hundred and fifty. I listened for a while with a palpitating heart, for the vases were really beautiful, and then I thought as they would cost nothing almost, I could afford to buy them for two niches in the parlor, which now looked sadly vacant. The bidding at last became quite spirited; after various efforts, with crimson face and beating heart, I called out "forty-five." The bidding still went on, and finding no one noticed me, I felt emboldened to make another trial. My opponents were falling off, the vases being evidently above their purses: and at last they were knocked down to me for sixty dollars. My first feeling was one of exultation at getting an article so very much below its value; but dear

reader, the next was that of dismay, when I remembered that I had already spent nearly one half of my money, and yet got nothing that was absolutely necessary.

I found that the next article marked on my catalogue would not be sold for some time, so I withdrew from the tempting proximity of all the pretty nick-knackeries, on which the bidding was going on.

"Ladies! a Cupid," was the next thing I heard. "None of you want Cupid, ladies? He's not dangerous, I assure you; see, he is bound hand and foot, and his arrow is perfectly harmless, for it is broken. The tears are in his eyes, poor fellow, for no one wants him."

The bidding which had somewhat declined in spirit on the previous articles, grew vociferous again, for some bid because they were put in a good humor by the jesting remarks of the shrewd auctioneer, who fully understood *amusing* people out of their money; others bid because they thought they might perhaps get a thing cheap, which they did not want; and some few like myself, really admired the little Parian Cupid.

"Five dollars," called out I, at a plunge, jumping from three dollars, which some one else had just bid. It was a bold stroke of mine to frighten off competitors, and succeeded too, for after but little opposition, the Cupid was pronounced to be mine at the price of eight dollars.

Again my heart sank, when I had time to reflect. Here were eight dollars more, spent on a perfectly useless thing; but I verily believe, dear reader, that the moment a woman enters an auction room she is bewitched to throw away money.

I became frightened at my want of power to resist the temptations which assailed me, so I resolutely withdrew to the other side of the room, to wait for the articles which I really needed.

"Now, gentlemen and ladies, here is one of the finest extension tables in the city, and made by one of the best cabinet-maker's. What's bid?" said the auctioneer.

Here was one of my *necessaries*. Papa had said it was all nonsense to give sixty-five dollars for an extension table, when he could eat just as well off the old-fashioned mahogany one, which he had bought when he was married: but at the numerous tea-parties that I was in the habit of having, I had felt very much annoyed at the old-fashioned proportions of our table, which was exceedingly wide, whereas the present mode was to have it long and narrow; and so I deemed an extension dining-table indispensable, and determined to have it if I could get it reasonably.

"Twenty dollars for an article worth three times the money!" said the auctioneer, to some one who had made a bid; "here Tom and Ben," to his assistants, "just run that table out and let the gentleman see what he bid twenty dollars on; it is sixteen feet long, gentlemen."

The table which had stood so compact, not longer than an ordinary sized centre-table, and beautifully polished, was soon drawn out, each part sliding from out its groove, as the auctioneer said, as if it had been greased.

I obtained the table for thirty dollars, and here at least experienced no compunctions, for the satisfaction which I felt at this purchase overwhelmed my regrets at my former ones.

Some table linen, a *bisquit* dessert service, and a couple of *papier mache* tea-poins completed the list of my articles; not, dear reader, because I was at all satisfied not to become the possessor of nearly everything in the room, but because my funds were almost exhausted, and there were yet numerous kitchen articles *absolutely necessary* to be purchased.

It was long past the dinner hour when I got home, for I had stopped at a second-hand store to sell our old dining-table, and have it removed that afternoon. Papa was waiting somewhat out of humor, for he was as punctual as a chronometer himself, so I did not think it advisable to rehearse my morning's adventures.

My purchases arrived late in the afternoon, and I was eager to have the bustle of arranging them over before my father's return from his office; so those destined for the parlor were carried in, and, to my dismay, I found that when the carman went to lift my vases into the niches they were entirely too large. In truth, they now looked enormous in our parlor, when in the large sale-room they appeared quite diminutive. There was no resource but to put them in the corners, and my other articles were placed about the room with more than indifference, with (I will confess it) a good deal of temper.

"But where are the leaves of the table?" asked I, of the men as they were leaving the house.

"Sure, mam, and thin they haven't come, they're jest at the fairnatur shop yet, mam," replied one.

"But Mr. Watson assured me that the leaves would be sent, and that the table was only kept closed in order to take up less room."

"Och, and sure thin, so you will get the leaves some time," was the reply; "but if thim fairnatur men can sell a thing half done jest, they're in no hurry to finish it."

"Say to Mr. Watson, when you go back, that,

if the leaves are not sent to-morrow, I shall return the table, and expect him to do the same with my money," said I, angrily.

"Yes, mam," replied the man, with a look that meant "that's more easily said than done!"

I was nearly worn out with the day's fatigue and excitement, and should have indulged in a good cry, if I had not heard my father's footstep in the hall.

"Hey! what this?" he called out, as he entered the parlor, and the huge vases loomed up before him. In a moment I heard a wax vesta scrape along the bottom of the fancy match-safe, the whole force of the gas-pipe was turned on the parlor, and through the open door to which I had crept, I saw him turn around on his heel with his hands in his pockets, and with a satirical smile take in all my purchases at a glance.

"I say, Fanny, where in the world did you get all these nonsensical gimcracks from? Positively your parlors, which were really elegant before, look now like an auctioneer's room."

I was so mortified that I burst into tears.

"Tut, child!" said my father, kindly, patting my shoulder, "don't cry. I dare say they will do very well; it's only my want of taste, I suppose. Everything in the room isn't worth one of your tears."

My father's kindness reassured me, so I at once made a "clean breast" of it by confessing the circumstances, and my inability to resist the temptation of purchasing the things; and at the same time acknowledging that I had now but ten dollars left out of my hundred and fifty.

"Well," said papa, coaxingly, "the vases are really handsome, and are worth just about what you paid for them; but then as they are of no earthly use and won't fit the niches, and are rather in the way than otherwise, they *must* be considered no bargain; you must see that yourself, my dear. Your tea-poins you paid about a dollar a piece more than you can buy them for at Moore's; and as to the Cupid, he is certainly a pretty fellow, the darling, but you can get a perfect one at Bailey's for the same price."

"Perfect! Why, what ails this one?"

"Only that one foot has been broken off and cemented on again, and the little toe has entirely disappeared. But 'put the best foot foremost,' Fan, and it will never show."

I was almost ready to cry again. After all this how could I acknowledge that the leaves of my extension-table had never been sent. But with my usual way of ridding myself of a disagreeable thing as fast as possible by plunging right into it, I took papa into the dining-room and showed him the table.

"Well, it is worth about twenty-five dollars," said my father, examining it. "It is very light, and not very strongly built, I suspect: but I suppose it will last as long as we want it. Where are the leaves?"

Now I had to acknowledge that the leaves had not yet arrived; and papa hinted that as I expected some friends to tea in a few evenings from that time, that I would have been quite as wise to have kept the old table till my new one was complete. "You see, Fanny," said he, laughingly, "that poetry is not invariably truth, for it is *not always*

'Well to be off in the old love
Before you are on with the new.'"

My table linen, he said, might be cheap, but he could tell more about it after it had been washed and the glazing was off; but, dear reader, he gave me some comfort, for although my biscuit dessert-set was not at all necessary, still it was very beautiful, and was worth just three dollars more than I had paid for it.

And what was the sequel to this? Why when the linen came to be washed it cracked all down

the folds in the middle, and had to be darned before it was twice used; and the day of my tea-party arrived, but my table leaves did not, and papa was obliged to go to the cabinet-maker and threaten to expose him if they were not immediately sent. He said that he had not had time to make them yet, but sent others in their place, which were two or three inches too wide, and which I to this day retain, so sick am I of auction goods and those who furnish them.

When my father found that my purchases were no longer a sore point with me, he jestingly proposed to use one of the vases as a bunch-bowl, and send the other, either as a christening fount to our new church, or else give it to my sister Carry for a bath-tub for little Harry; but he at last sent them to auction again and got within ten dollars of what I paid for them. Dear reader, the name of a cheap thing frightens me from thinking of purchasing it; and my father says that after all he considers that hundred and forty dollars well spent, I bought so much wisdom with it, and is rather pleased than otherwise with MY EXPERIENCE IN AUCTIONS.

H E L E N .

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 76.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE are many on this earth, who, out of their own hours and weeks of bodily suffering, know what it is to have God and heaven and the Saviour very near them, in the days and in the nights; and to feel their souls brought to a blessed purity and exaltation by the high communion. They know how loving and happy the heart is, when, day by day, the long-felt pain, the long-felt weakness go, so that once more they may be in the sunshine and the clear air; once more set their feet upon the beloved earth, feeling, all the while, how beautiful the world is, and how inexpressibly dear the wise Creator, the beneficent Father. Helen knew and felt it all; her heart swelled and the tears started, when she found herself in the shade of the trees again and in the scent of the flowers. She stood still to listen to the birds singing over her head and to the river murmuring beyond the garden. She looked upon the parents who watched and supported her steps as if she were again their little child, and felt how her lengthened life was better than their own life to them. And then she lay afterward in her chamber, alone, to rest and to bless God; to bless Him out of her innermost soul, that she still lived on the dear earth: to recall some of the words of the prayer, repeated many times in her chamber when it was like a sweet dream to her—remembered now as a sweet dream—"If she lives, may she live to Thee; if she dies, may she die to Thee;" to repeat the prayer again and again, and to think of the child-like fancies connected at the time with the new, the earnest, the tenderly modulated voice. In the midst of her thanks for herself, she wept for others; for the grey-haired, and for the babes with blue eyes and curling locks, that had fallen and were still falling of the scourge that had brought her so low. For it was a time of great sickness and mortality at the Bridge, and in most of the country places and villages about. Among those who had gone, and most lamented of all, was the good, venerable pastor, who had led them long and with tenderest, ablest hands. He was seized soon after Helen was. His long funeral train went

by on the first day that she was strong enough to sit at her window and look out upon the street; and, in her weakness and sorrow, she was shaken by the sight of it, as by a mighty tempest.

The good man's place in the desk and by the sick and dying, had been filled by his own nephew, Percy Phelps, who had just taken his degree. It was seen at once by the people that he was a young man of talent and rare earnestness. It was soon felt that he loved them; and they him, for his kind face and voice, for his large, sympathetic heart, and for his being the relative and favorite of him they had lost. He was installed, therefore, on a beaming September day, when the fruit hung ripe and glowing among the dark green leaves, when the beautiful harvest lay ripened upon the fields, and when multitudes came from near and from afar, came blessing God for the beaming day, for the harvest, for the good, the beloved shepherd He was giving them; and yet came with hearts melted and tearful, in memory of the heavenly-minded one, late in their midst, now gone from them to take up his repose, his crown.

CHAPTER VII.

HELEN sat in her chamber writing a letter to Luther Gaskell. Now the tears ran, and then hope, courage beamed upon her pale face as if it were an inspiration.

"Before I was sick, Luther," she wrote, "there was something that I felt I ought to say to you. But I dreaded what we would suffer. Now, I am not just what I was then. An experience like mine must always leave its mark on the life; must always, if it does its true work, make us careful to do exactly what is right, even if we and those whom our action concerns, must be severely tried for a season.

"Here in my chamber then, where I have been through so much, here with no-one near me but God, with no one knowing what I do but God, I ask you if we ought not, after this, to be just—friends; brother and sister, as you and dear Lillian are. I think we ought. Tell me what

you think; whether you are willing. We will always love each other. This we must do, after what has passed. We will be happier, when the first trial is over, than we ever have been in our present relation; will respect and esteem each other always, will we not, dear Luther? I could not bear anything else. Write very soon, won't you? I can't be at rest until I hear from you. Nor for a while afterward, as I feel, be your answer what it may. But God will help us both to bear if we look to Him, and put our trust in Him. For He is a good and loving Father.

Thine, HELEN."

They did both suffer. Both thought it wisest and best to go apart; but both suffered. And I doubt if there can ever be a sundering of the like ties, how weak soever they are, how dissonant soever the natures they have been holding together, that a time of darkness and disquiet does not follow. The vine that has grown, however lightly to however unequal a support, is bruised and tossed when torn away. The tendrils are broken and a while they bleed. Then it is over. The vine is healed. Daily new stamina comes; daily the vine, swaying to and fro, goes upward; so that soon one sees it clinging to the graceful pillar, the steadfast wall that erst were far above it.

One day, three weeks or thereabouts after the installation, (this is the way the people at the Bridge reckoned; they fixed all their dates for the next six months by Mr. Phelps' installation) Mrs. Dimick came, in her old shoes and gown, and quite out of breath, into Mrs. Spooner's kitchen, where that lady was bending over the stove to fry her pancakes. She tipped her head in the way of a bow, saying with her nasal voice, "How d'ye do, Miss Spooner?" and, without waiting for an answer, dropped into a low, kitchen chair, locked her fingers as she energetically lay them on her lap, began rocking mightily and said—"I guess *you'll* be struck up."

"What about?" Mrs. Spooner looked up, but still bent low over her pancakes.

"I guess you'll say 'what about' when you know."

"When I know what! where've you been?" still bending, and holding still in mid-air the skimmer that should have been moving among the over-done pancakes.

"I've been to Deacon Cushing's, where I go every Monday to wash, as you know." And again she went on with her rocking.

"The land! my pancakes! burnt fairly to a coal! and there goes one on the floor to grease that. And I scoured it on my hands and knees only this forenoon." Mrs. Spooner was always

scouring, Miss Dimick and other neighbors, as well, were accustomed to say—"If you could only tell, Mrs. Dimick, what you have on your mind!"

The head tossing about as if it were on springs, the black eyes flashing, cut Mrs. Dimick off from farther coquetry over her secret, which was this that the reader already knows—that Helen and Luther were no longer mutually pledged. Mrs. Dimick went into Mrs. Cushing's dining-room closet, as she was accustomed to do "while her clothes were boiling," as she said, to eat her luncheon. And while there, through the sitting-room door that was a little ajar, she heard Helen and her mother talking about it; about the letter that the former had sent, and the answer she had received. This was the secret; and while she was revealing it, (rocking no longer, but with her chin put forward, and speaking between her gesticulating and her snuff-taking) Mrs. Spooner said, "The land!" Then she said, "You don't!" Mrs. Dimick had just been telling her that Helen cried; that she heard her, when she was telling her mother how long her engagement to Luther had been troubling her. She next said, "Goodness! what a time there'll be, when it gets out," forgetting her pancakes altogether. She finally concluded that it was of no use trying to fry pancakes. She would just clap the teapot on the stove. She would let the table be back by the wall; would just turn up a leaf; there, that was it. She would have the cloth on; (she wouldn't unfold it much, just for them; she would lay it over again before it was time for Mr. Spooner and the boys to come.) There! Mrs. Dimick should lay off her bonnet and have some tea and pancakes, and go home upon the strength of them. It was the best tea! She *guessed* the pancakes would be good; and she broke one open, as she talked, to see how it was. They *were* good, and they ought to be, she said; for she put in three eggs, a spoonful of cream, and a half cupful of maple sugar.

Yes, indeed! Mrs. Dimick's bonnet was off and hanging on a post of her chair. She looked smilingly at the pancakes and the steaming tea; she said she *knew* they would be good; every thing that she ever ate on Mrs. Spooner's table was good. She had heard Mrs. Cushing say that she—Mrs. Spooner—was one of the best of cooks. She heard her say it the day that Mr. Phelps was installed. She was there helping them; they had such a houseful. Yes! that pleased Mrs. Spooner. If Mrs. Cushing had said that she was an intelligent woman, a gentle, Christian woman, it would have pleased her less.

A new thought came to Mrs. Spooner. She

sat a few moments in silence over it; and then with slow head wavings, said—"Em! I guess Mr. Phelps has had a thing or two to do with this. I guess he has."

"Not a thing! for Helen—you know I told you that she had been troubled about it all along; even before she was sick; before she knew any thing about Mr. Phelps. Then she dreaded doing anything. But she said that since she was sick, she feels different; like a new creature, as 'twere. She says she don't dread anything that it is God's will that she should do or bear. These were her very words."

"Do you 'spose she's been converted while she was sick?"

"I *think* so. It seems like that. She looks different. I think of—of a martyr, you know; this is what I think of, when I see her face as it looks sometimes. And she said to-day, when she was talking about bearing and doing God's will, she said something about a martyr's life and death seeming glorious to her."

"I should think she'd tell of it, if she is converted. I—I went all through my father's neighborhood and told everybody and give them a good talking to, when I was converted. That's what everybody ought to do. More tea, Miss Dimick."

"Yes. It's such good tea! Where'd you have it?"

"At Farnham's. I always have all my tea there. And we use a master sight of it."

"I do. I can't help it. I can't get along without my tea; without strong tea too, though I know it hurts me. About Helen going round as you did, Miss Spooner," stirring her tea with her gaze in her cup, "*she* couldn't do it. Tain't her way. She'll jest go on and look and speak now and then in such a way, that folks will see that—as Mr. Phelps said the next Sunday after he was installed, that she 'has been with Jesus.' Then, after a while, she'll be taken into the church, and come to the communion in a way just as if she was an innocent little child that loved everybody."

Mrs. Spooner did not hear all that Mrs. Dimick said. She was busy with her own thoughts. "The first Sunday that Helen got out to church," she began, in a dreamy way, and with her eyes on a vacancy—"it was two weeks before Mr. Phelps was installed, you know, he was in the pulpit when she come in. He sot where he could see her. And he *did* see her. His eyes grew brighter when she come; and he said a good many things that day, in his prayers and in his sermon, that had thoughts of her in 'em. I remember I thought so at the time. And I

thought it was because she was Deacon Cushing's daughter and had been so sick. We all felt for her, you know. Wall, we shall see what will be going on a year from this."

"No doubt of it," without leaving the table, taking hold of her bonnet to go. "But we mustn't say a word, not a single word to any body, until it leaks out some other way. The deacon's folks wouldn't like it if they knew that I heard it and then went and told. They have such high kind of notions of what is right, you know. And I'd rather anybody else would talk real hard to me, than for them to *think* that I've done a mean thing. Any day, I'd rather; any day!" She was tying her bonnet to go. "You won't tell anybody; not even your husband."

"Poh! I never tell *him* anything. He don't care any more about such things! Or, at any rate, he thinks it's foolish to speculate about 'em, as he calls it. I shan't be likely to tell *him*!" tossing her head about. "He'd be the *last* person." She was growing indignant. Mrs. Dimick said, therefore—"I 'spose so." And then added, sighing, lifting her eyebrows, and, at the same time dropping her lids—"Husbands will be husbands, and wives *have* to be wives."

"That they do! But about this affair, you'll watch and see how things go, and then come in. Come in any time. I like a good cup of tea a'most any time of day. We'll have one and something good to eat with it, any time when you'll come in."

"You're very good."

But she wasn't very good, was she, reader mine? Perhaps this was in part her husband's fault, though. If he had been companion and friend as well as husband, and talked some of his politics and metaphysics and really strong and excellent common sense at home, and directly to her, perhaps her active brain and tongue would have betaken themselves to better channels.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I *DIDN'T* think of stopping to tea, I'm sure. I thought I'd just run in on my way. I wanted to talk it over with you."

"I'm glad you did. I somehow kept thinking you'd come. I've been to the window ten times, if I have once, to see if you weren't turning up to the gate. I've been so lonesome! Mr. Spooner's gone to-day, down to the convention. I don't know, I'm sure, what makes me miss him any," she added, as she was bringing some dishes out of a closet. "He's in the house so little, you know! and says so little, when he *is* here."

"I know it. But then—"

"But then he's my husband, you see," pausing in the midst of her cloth-laying. "He's my husband. And I was thinking before you come, that, when he's gone away out of the place, half of the world seems gone."

"I dare say. The law!" adjusting her apron strings. "I miss my husband when he's gone. But I don't miss him so much as I should if he was such a man as Deacon Cushing, for instance."

"Ready, Miss Dimick. Take your chair right up to the table. Why of course you don't. You can't. He can't expect it. My husband can't expect it. You think then that Mr. Phelps and Helen like each other?"

"I know they do. I don't expect they know it. Of course Mr. Phelps don't think anything about it; for he 'sposes that she of a right belongs to Luther Gaskell yet. To-day there was flowers—some little beauties; I don't know what they were, I'm sure—in a dear little glass on the round table where they sat. The sun come in through the leaves, that kept all the time wavering, and made the flowers, and the carpet, and curtains, and everything and everybody in the room look so bright! Tears kept coming into my eyes when I looked; and I wished and kept wishing, and wish it now, that I could any way be like them, and my home could be like their home."

"Were the deacon and Miss Cushing there?"

"Yes. She was talking with me about Charley. His spine grows worse, you know; and she wants me to have something done for him. The deacon was making out my pay. Mr. Phelps was reading to Helen while she sewed; and what makes me think they like each other, is, the way they looked each other in the face, and talked with each other about what he read; and the sound of their voices. Their voices were different from what they are when they speak to others."

"Strange it don't leak out! This about Helen and Luther, I mean," she added, on seeing that Mrs. Dimick looked for a flaw in the teapot, from which she was pouring the last drop of tea. It was Mrs. Dimick's fourth cupful; and Mrs. Spooner had drank as many. "What was Mr. Phelps reading in?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. A very good book though. One thing he read was this; and I remember it so well, because, when Helen asked him to, he read it over again to us; and then they all talked about how good it was that it was so. 'Joy, true joy, always excels sorrow, and with right; for sorrow passes away, but joy remains forever.' Do you know? I keep saying this over in my mind, and it somehow makes me feel different, as if I were better for it. Mr.

Phelps is a dear man; and Helen, if he marries her, will make a dear woman for him."

"Yes. Another piece of this pie, Miss Dimick."

"No." Mrs. Dimick was not very hungry. She somehow felt as if she had been fed by what she had seen and heard at the deacon's. "It somehow made her feel sad too," she said; "her own life was so poor, so different from theirs. She thought her being obliged to work so hard and being so poor, had something to do with it. Still"—and she said it with a heavy sigh and with tears starting—"she had known people poorer than she was, who were like the angels in heaven."

"Ah, yes, indeed!" Mrs. Spooner said. "For her part, she had thought for a long time, that, if she was poor, she should feel her want of God oftener, should pray more and be a better Christian. She thought, that, having such a great house to see to, and so much of everything to see to, made her worldly and wicked." And Mrs. Spooner too had tears in her eyes and penitence in her heart. They parted at length at the door, with this mutually drawn conclusion; that, whether one is rich or poor, it is possible and best for one to love God earnestly, and to live a good, pious life.

But alas! Mrs. Spooner's long-besetting sin tripped her the moment that she seemed to be turning into "the narrow way." She hastened after Mrs. Dimick to the gate, and set it to tripping her also.

"You'll be on the watch at the deacon's," said Mrs. Spooner, with stealthy look and voice. Mrs. Dimick started a little at the interruption. She was thinking how poor Jesus was, when He was on the earth, and what heavenly goodness He had.

"You know," pursued Mrs. Spooner, laughing a little at the start, "you know Luther 'll be coming up to see his folks before long. Be on the watch for that, won't you?"

Mrs. Dimick's eye kindled a little with the low fire that was in Mrs. Spooner's. But her voice was still sad as she replied, "Yes, yes, I will."

We hope she will not. We hope that this foreshadowing of a higher life that she feels upon her, may leave her only as the life itself shall advance and take its place firmly within her.

CHAPTER IX.

BUT Mrs. Spooner's strong tea and good dishes tempted her, and she did again eat and drink and take up her foolish, vitiating gossip.

"Tell me all about it, Miss Dimick. Let me fill your cup. Your tea must be nearly cold."

"Wall, you see I went to the depot to see 'Manda off. Miss Cushing and Helen went to meet some folks that had been up to the Lake, and were going to stop coming back; them grand friends of theirs from Portsmouth; what is their name?"

"Odell? was it the Odells?"

"Yes! the Odells."

"Perhaps it was the Pinkertons. They live in Portsmouth and are tremendous rich."

"No. It was the Odells. Well, you see they—the Odells, I mean, didn't come out of the cars, all at once. They staid to bid good day to some friends that was going on, I heard them say. And so you see it happened, that, while Helen and her mother waited for them—talking with Major Walton; they were talking with him—who should come along but Luther Gaskell! He come straight along, straight into the piazza, don't you think, saying, 'How d'ye do?' and shaking hands with the men, along; coming nearer and nearer where Miss Cushing and Helen and the major stood. I tell you, if I didn't watch with all of my eyes, then!"

"I should think so! How *did* they look, Helen and Luther? I should have thought they would have died, almost."

"Well, when he fust come in sight of her, he started and stopped short off, as if he had been shot. You'd have laughed. She blushed a little bit; then she was pale; and I could jest see by her fingers that she trembled a little. But she come right forward, in her way that is jest like a child, put out her hand to shake hands, and said nothing but 'Luther.' Wasn't that a neat way to do it?"

"She always does everything prettier than anybody else, that ever I see. What did he do?"

"Why, he seemed to hold back a little, for a minute, and looked down. Then he looked up into her face. This mastered him, you see. He smiled and brightensd up more and more; and when she said, 'I'm glad you've come. We all wanted to see you,' he looked as pleased as could be, and chatted with her and her mother, and didn't seem to know that there *was* anybody else. And Helen looked so happy; you can't think! Ah! and then when they stood there talking, who should come along with Deacon Cushing but Mr. Phelps, himself!"

"He did?"

"Yes! Wan't I on the watch then, if ever I was! And I could jest see that he started and stopped, jest a little, jest for an instant; and then it was all over. You wouldn't have known, when he come for'ard to speak to 'em all, that he'd ever been started, or moved, a hair. But,

jest then the Odells come along, and Professor Gaskell; and 'hat kind of broke things up, you know; and they all went away together—together pretty soon—except Mr. Phelps. He bid 'em all good day, in his perlitte way; then, after they were gone, stood as still as the house and with his eyes down, a minute or two. When he looked up, the fust thing he see was me looking right at him. I really thought he colored a little. But it was soon over. He came to me, spoke about how beautiful the day was, asked if Charley was better, and then went away alone, looking very sober."

"I sh'd like to tell him that they aint engaged now."

"Don't you, though. If you do, I never will tell you anything again, to the longest day I live!"

"I shan't. I only *said* so. Don't you suppose it'll soon get out now, any way? now Luther is here?"

"I'd know, I'm sure. I don't know who is to tell of it. They'll be together, a good deal—for the Odells go to see both families, you know; and I shan't think strange if Luther goes back without anybody's finding it out. If he does, it don't seem as though I could keep it in much longer. I'd know what I should have done, till this time, if I couldn't have told you."

"Sure enough! We can plague Miss Crane, can't we, when it does get out? She'll come, tired to death, to tell us, and then we can let her know how long we've been having a good time about it. Won't it be good?"

"Yes, I guess it will. I've thought about her a good many times. She'll be kind o' mad, likely as not. She always comes to me with everything, you know. But I must be going! Harriet was gone over to her uncle Ben's, and I left my baby in to Mrs. Locke's. They'll be tired of him, and let him cry, likely as not. I know they have done that thing more than once! more than twice!"

"Well, you'll be in to the deacon's?"

"You know I go to clean house every Saturday forenoon. Day after to-morrow I shall be there."

"Come in when you go home."

"I guess I will. Good day."

CHAPTER X.

As Mrs. Dimick said, the Odells were friends not only of the deacon's family, but of Professor Gaskell's. They were the friends, moreover, of other families; so that parties were given and excursions made up. Sails were taken on the river, and walks along the pretty paths on the shore. In many of these Mr. Phelps was included;

and he and others listened to hear how Helen sang out of her relieved heart, like a bird; and looked on to see how well united she and Luther were.

"I never saw them so happy in each other," was often said. "I used to think they didn't care for each other. But they do."

And so they did. They had never loved each other so truly. And, yet, they felt, both of them, as they acknowledged to each other, that to go back to the old relation, would be to go back to unwelcome bonds.

"Help me, Luther," Helen said, now, whenever it was necessary. It was not often necessary. He was almost always near, to do, with a friendly, a new composure, whatever needed to be done.

Only, one time, when they were out, together with their families and their visitors, they went down by some mills, where were rafts of logs, floating boards, flues and dams, and scores of lurking-places, great and small, where danger might be and yet not be seen; and Helen and Lillian strayed away from the rest, as they had always liked to do since they were little children, to talk unrestrainedly, to listen to the commingled sounds of the river, the birds and the fluttering leaves, and to nurse their love for each other and for the beautiful earth. They went on, on, until they were beyond the mills, in the narrow path that ran through the hazles between the river and a carriage road over the common, used chiefly by the mill people. Here, at a shelving point of the bank, close to the river, Helen's foot slipped. She caught a twig, which, if it had been a sound one, would have saved her. But it snapped, without staying her fall in the least, and she fell into the water, which there was black and deep. Before the scream had fairly left Lillian's lips, the hazles that came between the path and the road were parted, and Mr. Phelps appeared. In an instant he was in the stream; so that he caught Helen just as she was about to sink the second time. She was insensible, when he brought her out, and remained so some minutes, during which time he employed his free hand, as well as he was able, in rubbing her hands and arms. He put his ear down close to listen for her breath; he laid his hand on her cold cheek, her cold lips, her still heart, and said again and again, with his face close to her's—"Poor Helen! poor, dear Helen." She drew a long, sobbing, labored breath. "Dear Helen—dear Helen!" he repeated, in his thankfulness. And she opened her eyes slowly and smiled a little when she saw the earnest, wistful face.

"Good, kind Mr. Phelps!" she murmured, laying her hand lightly, and for an instant, on his

that put the wet hair back from her cheek and neck.

Meanwhile Lillian had gone to bring help. She went a long way; for tired of their walk, their party had already turned back toward home. When, at last, they came, with rushing and sore adfright, they found Helen still in Mr. Phelps' arms, laughing at the whole affair; laughing, especially, that she was in such a plight; that she must stay there where she was, always, for, aught she could do; since she had tried and found that she could no more command herself than if she was a mummy. They all laughed. But her parents and others had tears in their eyes when some one said—"What a mercy that you happened to be near, Mr. Phelps!"

Yes; Mr. Phelps thought that it was a great mercy; but he sighed, now and then; now and then had very sad eyes in the midst of the hearty rejoicing.

Luther had gone up to the village after a carriage and blanket shawls. When he came, he helped Mrs. Cushing and Lillian wrap her in the shawls; and all the rest helped, in fact; for they would all do something for her at *that* moment. When the deacon offered his arm on one side, Mr. Phelps sighed again—a short, quick sigh, but Helen heard it—and was about to move away to leave the other side for Luther. But the little fingers tightening on his arm kept him; and, that time, he sighed no more.

He thought it all over afterward, in his study. He thought it over, again and again, at the same time that he was trying his best to write his sermon. He still called it "a mercy" that he was there to save Helen. He would always call it a mercy, let what would come. But he sighed; and as he wiped his pen, that he might go and walk, and perhaps rid himself of the forbidden, albeit, the delicious remembrance connected with that hour, he murmured to himself, "There must be no more of this. She belongs to another, not to me. I have no right to this thought of her; and God forbid that I cherish it."

Ah, but his walk did him no good. He neither felt the breeze, nor saw the sky, nor heard any of those sounds that were wont to fill his soul with such calm pleasure. He kept his eyes on the path and thought of Helen.

When he left home he said—"I must not go there," meaning to the spot where he saved her. And he did leave the village by an opposite route. But he came back by that same pleasantest of all paths, through the hazles on the river side: came and sat on the very spot where he had sat so long holding her in his arms, as if she belonged to him; as if she were his own. Ah, could he

but have one more hour like that, in his whole future life-time! If he might—

"Mr. Phelps"—he heard a gentle, a thrilling voice say. Helen was coming close to him, in the path.

He held out his hand to her, and smiled his welcome. It did not startle him, abstracted as his thought had been; sudden as was her appearance. She looked so calm, so like a pure child; and it somehow seemed quite natural that she should come to be at his side in that spot. That spot belonged to them, henceforth; and they to that.

For a while, as they stood and talked earnestly, it even seemed to him as if they belonged to each other. He thought, however, by-and-bye, how it was. Then he dropped her hand, drew a half stifled sigh, and, without looking at her, asked abruptly when Mr. Gaskell would return to Manchester. Helen "did not know. She had hardly seen him since their visitors left, two days ago. She believed her father said at breakfast that he would go now, in a day or two." She looked quietly in Mr. Phelps' face as she answered him, and spoke with a calm voice.

"Haven't seen him, for two days? did you say this? Pardon me; but I have heard—you must know, Miss Cushing, that I have heard, ever since I came to the Bridge, that you are engaged to him; that you have been a long time."

"We have been engaged. Now we are not. We are friends, nothing more. This was settled before I left my chamber; it was what we both chose."

Mr. Phelps did not say anything. For some minutes he did not; but his face cleared up into a beaming look of thankfulness. He took her hand in his again; and, after he had drawn it through his arm, kept it near his heart.

Helen was the first to speak. She said something about the morning's being beautiful; and then something about going on over to the Seminary to see a friend; this was the plan with which she started from home. He looked abroad a little when she spoke of the morning, and then back to her. When she talked of going, he held her hand close, with a gentle pressure, a moment, then he let it go, and parted the hazles for her to pass through to the road across the common.

He looked after her graceful figure a moment, as it retreated, and then went back to his seat on the bank to sit a while; to try and school his heart for a severe acceptance of the new, the unlooked-for enjoyment; to try and think of God, and to bless Him for this and for all His mercies; and, at last, to feel sorrowful, that, strive as he would, a beautiful idol was every

moment coming between him and the good Being he loved and tried to worship.

Weeks and months, many months passed, and not a word was spoken between them of the love they had, one for the other. There was no need of words, for eye revealed it to eye, and touch to touch. He called, as he had all along been accustomed to do; only a little oftener, perhaps; and perhaps he made his calls a little longer, some of them. Mrs. Dimick thought that he did; and she "watched" affairs pretty closely.

He had unalloyed comfort in being near Helen; she unalloyed comfort in being near him. This was enough for them. Helen was very gentle and quiet. She read a great deal, out of the books he brought; books of a high intellectual and spiritual order; and became, every day of her life, more touchingly beautiful; not only in face—not, indeed, so much in face, as in a kind, sympathetic, attractive grace, that bound her more and more to others—especially to those who needed to be comforted—and others more and more to her. She still laughed aloud and merrily. That she did! That she hoped she would be able to do, while she lived. She still clapped her hands, as she laughed, and perhaps skipped a little, over the ludicrous, or the glad passages of life; still spoke her own free words, thought her own free thoughts, lived her own free life; but they were, more and more, the words, the thoughts and the life, disciplined and attuned to heavenly harmony and beauty, by what she had suffered; by the new thoughts of life, that, one by one, came with a still, solemn march, and took up their place at her side; by her love for one so noble and good; by her love of God, as if he were a Father daily seen and spoken with; and of heaven, as a *home*, a holy place, close by which she would fain keep herself, with spotless robes, with the cross, not lying heavily on her shoulders, but at her feet, and with the crown that the faithful and loving wear, on her head. And for her, a true child of Eden, the growing graces and generousities and amiabilities, came not, as we are wont to feel, that, what we call acquirements, accomplishments, and so on, do come; namely, from books, good society, and other outward sources. They were not the fruit and flowers taken to her hands from other gardens; but a spontaneous growth of the tree of life blossoming within. And in this most beautiful, most to-be-longed-for of all endowments and attributes, was she the true woman of impulse, of genius.

When Percy Phelps took her, there at his own altar, in the midst of his own people, to be his bride and helpmate, the old and the young, as

they looked on their beaming but tender features, bowed down and did both reverence; and said, at the door, and on their way home, “They will be a blessing to each other and to us.”

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SOPHIA HARRIS' CHOICE.

BY HELEN H. MAY.

SOPHIA HARRIS was an extremely beautiful girl; tall and elegant in form, with features of perfect regularity; and that bright, ever changing expression which gives to beauty its greatest charms. Her personal attractions received no aid from costly attire or radiant gems, for Mr. Harris was no "millionaire," and on the profit of his business a large family was dependant. Sophia, however, with her cheerful disposition thought not of rebelling against existing circumstances, and being the eldest daughter, readily took charge of the younger members of the household, thus relieving her mother of many wearisome cares, and aiding in the system of economy which in so numerous a family was essential.

Although mingling but little in gay society, Sophia's brilliant charms could not remain unnoticed; and she numbered among her admirers men of rank and fortune, as well as those belonging more to her own sphere. Unaccountable, therefore, seemed her choice of the humblest and least attractive of her suitors, Philip Darley.

"Why, Sophy, what has bewitched you to accept that man?" asked a gay young friend, when she had been duly informed of the fact. "A common, ugly mechanic—when you know that Bob Lee is almost crazy to win your favor. Foolish girl! I wish he would take a fancy to me; you should soon see that I would not be silly enough to refuse him—for a fellow like Darley, too. Excuse me, Sophy; you know I would not hurt your feelings; but I lose all patience when I think of your accepting *that man*."

"I am sorry, Jane, to subject your patience to so great a trial," replied Sophia, with her own bright smile. "But come, now; think and speak rationally on the subject, and tell me what chance of happiness could I have, married to your great favorite, Lee, whose temper is as ungovernable as a woman's?"

"Why, you would have every chance of happiness. You would have a magnificent house to make yourself happy in; you would have plenty of money for whatever you desire; you would have a splendid carriage to take you visiting or shopping; you would have a large circle of friends, and everything to pass away your time;

and, not the least in my estimation, you would have a husband of whom you need not be ashamed. I cannot think that Lee's temper is as violent as you imagine; but there are others whom you could easily get; there is Dr. M——, why not take him if you want a good, quiet soul? Any one rather than the one you have accepted."

"I esteem Dr. M—— highly as a kind friend and an excellent physician," said Sophia, gently. "More than that he never could be to me. The difference in our ages, if nothing else, would be an insuperable objection."

"I should think you would prefer him, notwithstanding his age, to that hideous carpenter," persisted the other. "He is really the ugliest mortal I ever *did* see, with his great grey eyes, and coarse features; just such a man as one would be ashamed to be seen speaking to in the street. Are you possessed, Sophia, or are you blind, that you do not perceive how extremely homely he is?"

"I hope I am not either, Jenny; I know Philip is not handsome, but he has beauty of heart and soul which I can see and appreciate. His ever ready kindness and amiability have long prepossessed me in his favor, and I assure you, Jane, in all seriousness, that I consider myself fortunate in the offer he has made me of his heart and hand, with all his 'extreme homeliness.'"

"And poverty into the bargain," rejoined Jane, with something of a sneer. "It is useless to talk to you, I find; but I must say that I always thought you had better *taste* than to fancy a man like Darley: and better *sense* than to marry one in his circumstances. If he were wealthy one might overlook his personal defects; but so poor, and then a mechanic, too—why, child, I will wager that before five years he will be as old-looking as Dr. M——, and worse than that, he will have a worn, miserable look, and perhaps a stoop in his shoulders—horrible."

Sophia laughed merrily as her companion tossed her head in contemptuous derision of the figure that rose before her imagination. "If such a terrible calamity should occur, I think it would not make much difference in my feelings, provided the loss of symmetry did not extend to his mind. As for poverty, Jane, I do not

apprehend that. I shall probably live as well as I have hitherto done, and if my married life prove as happy as my girlhood has been, I shall have no cause to regret the want of affluence. Not that I would reject wealth if it were in my way; I should be very glad; though not for the splendor in which it would enable me to live."

"Oh, of course not," interrupted Jane, "your principal delight in possessing money, I suppose, would arise from the power of giving it away."

"That would, certainly, be its greatest charm in my estimation," returned Sophia, earnestly. "I should regard but little the costly dress or splendid abode wealth could procure me; but I often have sad thoughts, Jane, when I meet poor children going to church or to school, and when I see women looking distressed and wretched, with only thin, miserable garments, while I, comfortably clothed, shrink from encountering the cold—then I feel sad for these poor creatures, and imagine the homes they have to return to, little better than the bleak street; and oh! I long for wealth that I could make them all comfortable."

"You should marry one of your wealthy lovers then," said Jane, laughingly, "and you would be able to gratify your benevolent inclinations. But are you really going to take Darley, or are you only jesting, Sophia?"

"I should be sorry if it were only a jest, my dear Jenny. But you may assure yourself it is true, and when the day is fixed you shall be the first to learn the pleasant news," said Sophia, with a mirthful smile as her friend left her.

And they were married—the poor, homely carpenter and the beautiful, graceful girl; and Sophia speedily found herself installed mistress of a home very much like that which had from childhood been dear to her. There was sufficient for comfort, but very little of mere ornament or elegance, yet Sophia was happy, and thought her situation an enviable one. She would not consent to her husband's proposal of employing a domestic; the cares of her little household were pleasant duties to her, and she found plenty of time to occupy or amuse herself as she desired. The days passed cheerily away; and in the evening, when the tea-things were put away, and she sat down to sew, the young mechanic was ever there, resting after his willing toil; while he conversed in his quiet, cheerful manner, or read aloud from some book interesting to both. And when another came to claim a share in the affection which made the light and blessing of that humble home—a smiling little boy, the very image of his beautiful mamma—what heart could know deeper or purer happiness than her's!

But who may venture to anticipate an exemption from all the cares and sorrows of earth? who, in a world of changes, hope for a life-time of unalloyed felicity? With the sixth year of her wedded life a cloud gathered over Sophia's bright horizon—a small, faint cloud, yet threatening to overspread that sky of love and happiness. Alas! her's was the old, sad story! The excitement of an election campaign had made a marked change in Darley, under whose quiet exterior ran a latent current of strong enthusiasm. Evening now frequently found him in a circle of party friends, where political matters were warmly discussed, and the health of their candidates drank in flowing bumpers; and though, for a time, Philip had resolutely refused to join in their convivialities, yet, his resolution by degrees wavering, he ended by willingly joining his companions. What possible harm could one glass of punch do? argued his friends; and he repeated the query to himself with something like mortification that he should ever have been silly enough to decline it.

But Sophia—not so easily could she be convinced by this argument, when pressed by her husband, in reply to her gentle remonstrances. With the perception of a wife—a mother—she foresaw the evil to which "one glass" might eventually lead; and, during the long winter evenings, after her child was laid in his little couch, as she sat alone, waiting the return of him who had formerly rendered those evening hours so pleasant, she pondered with sad forebodings on the subject. Still she hoped, even amidst her fears; Philip had never yet been intoxicated; the "one glass" rendering him talkative and sociable, had not, as yet, been exceeded; and she trusted that the election over he would resume his old habits.

One night Philip returned home earlier than usual. It was only nine o'clock, and Sophia was just preparing little Robert for bed, having yielded to his earnest entreaties to allow him to remain up an hour beyond his accustomed time. The little fellow, still bright and wakeful, followed his mother to the door, exclaiming in childish glee as she opened it, "Oh, papa! I am so glad you've come, papa, I wanted to stay up till you came home, and mamma wouldn't let me any longer." Darley was in a strange mood that night, half vexed at his own conduct, and the simple words of the child sounded to him like covert reproaches for being out so long. It was with a harsh tone, therefore, that he addressed him, "What business have you to be up at this hour?" pushing the little hand that clung to his away with a violent jerk, which together with the harsh words and looks seemed to petrify the

affectionate child, hitherto used only to smiles and caresses. He stood an instant looking up at his father, his little bosom heaving, and tears slowly welling to his bright eyes; then with a low, deep sob, flung himself into his mother's arms, sobbing wildly, "mamma, oh, mamma, mamma," in tones of mingled sorrow and affright. The mother did not speak, but she clasped him convulsively in her arms, pressing fond kisses on the bright head upon which her own tears were fast falling.

There was a silence unbroken save by the piteous sobs of the distressed and terrified child; an awkward silence to Darley, who was ashamed of his violence, sat down moodily and ill at ease, every smothered sob falling heavily on his heart. He looked round the neat parlor where every thing betokened the hand of thrifty care; he looked upon his wife, whose fair face was shadowed by sorrow, upon his child, where both he had so rapturously welcomed, and from whose bright eyes were now gushing the sorrowful tears he had caused to flow—and he asked himself what could have brought sorrow to that once happy home. Shrink from the conviction as he might, he could not conceal from himself that he alone was in fault. He could but feel that, but for the new associations he was forming, that evening as well as all others would have been spent in the tranquil enjoyments of home—that but for the "one glass," and the consequent irritability of his reproachful feelings, he would not have been angered by the artless words of the innocent child. And with these slowly admitted convictions came up fond memories of former days, and Darley's heart was again alive to all the love it had ever cherished for her who had entrusted her happiness confidently to his

keeping; for the little one who looked up to him for love, advice, and example.

He sat for half an hour thus meditating, and when he rose it was with the holy and determined resolve that love inspired. Crossing the room, he knelt beside the low stool on which sat his wife, gently embracing her and the little Robert, who, half reassured by his father's tender caresses, threw his arms fondly around his neck, while the tears that had been subsiding again began to flow.

"My boy, my precious child! I have caused those tears; but never shalt thou or thy dear mother shed another tear for my misdeeds. I see my error and my danger now, Sophia; forgive me for the past, and from this night, while God leaves me reason, I shall never again touch the fatal glass, and we will be happy as we once were."

Sophia's forgiveness was readily granted; and smiles of hope and joy took the place of tears as she gazed into her husband's face, brightened by a new and holy resolve.

Years have passed since that night; how well the promise then prompted and strengthened by true and abiding affection has been kept, one glance at the still fair and blooming wife in her happy home reveals. Success has crowned the willing labors of the young mechanic, without altering their simple tastes; and while Sophia enjoys the delights arising from the realization of her girlish schemes of benevolence, and sees her husband now, in his prosperity, respected and esteemed even by those who had once affected to despise, she has even cause for deeper rejoicing that her choice fell not on the most wealthy or elegant, but on the most amiable and worthy of her suitors.